

PARNASSUS





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PARNASSUS

LITERARY MAGAZINE
OF
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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*Parnassus is the name of the mythological mountain home
of the nine muses who inspired humankind in the arts.*

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The policy of the editorial staff has been to select material for the magazine democratically. We have read each work submitted and viewed all artwork. We voted to determine eligibility: a majority vote for a piece meant publication. Parnassus provides an opportunity for new artists and writers to reach others; it's a showcase of student creativity.

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----|
| Photo | Carl Russo | 2 |
| Love Me for Today | Jeffrey Driscoll | 4 |
| Jack Frost Will Get You | Annette Colson | 4 |
| Patrice | Donna Finocchiaro | 4 |
| Someday Homeday Blues in A7th | Don Hayes, Bill Gleed, Chris Daly | 5 |
| Rainbow | Dan Lyons | 6 |
| Sunsets | J. L. Barnhart | 7 |
| St Anne's | Mickie Richardson | 7 |
| A Dream | Charlene Cortes | 7 |
| The Spider | Dennis John Lebel | 8 |
| Photo | Carl Russo | 8 |
| To Grandmother's House | Faith Gillman | 9 |
| Birthday Blues | Chris Daly | 9 |
| Robert | Faith Gillman | 10 |
| Blondes | Donna Finocchiaro | 10 |
| Photo | E. Jacqueline Sakash | 11 |
| The Fate of the Burgandy Waters | Nancy J. Robinson | 12 |
| My Father | Anita LeBlanc | 14 |
| Ten Year Old Soldier | Bill Gleed | 15 |
| Ssssst | Annette Colson | 15 |
| Childhood Reviewed | Elizabeth Buckheit | 16 |
| The Path | J. L. Barnhart | 16 |
| Mary Jane | Bill Gleed | 16 |
| Searching | M. B. G. D'Oleo | 16 |
| When Life Is A Nightmare | Mary Aram | 17 |
| Weight Loss | Marilyn M. Chenelle | 18 |
| Art | Donna Partridge | 20 |
| The Clock | Beth Estabrook | 21 |
| How the Faces Have Changed | Chris Daly | 21 |
| Premonitions of Roses (A Dedication to Spring) | Carla Corcoran | 22 |
| The Window | Terry Rezendes | 22 |
| A Hero | Jean Elardo | 23 |
| Art | Tom Champoux | 26 |
| How to Give First Aid to a Murder Victim | Craig Quimby | 28 |
| Ravine | Carole Banks | 29 |
| Did You Know That | Roseanne Kranz | 29 |
| Home Safe | Anonymous | 30 |
| With Love in Spring | Carolyn P. Reynolds | 32 |
| Baby Doll | Marilyn M. Chenelle | 33 |
| Photo | E. Jacqueline Sakash | 34 |
| Coroner's Report on the Anatomy of a Beatlemaniac | Kelly Sanborn | 35 |
| Images | Emily Reynolds | 36 |
| How Was I | Emily Reynolds | 36 |
| Beautiful Child | Charlene Cortes | 37 |
| Rebirth | Roseanne Kranz | 37 |
| Writer's Block | Carla Corcoran | 37 |
| A Poem | Terry Rezendes | 37 |
| My Name Is Michael | John Michael Doggett | 38 |
| Do You Cry? | Don Hayes | 44 |
| Brief Honeymoon | Beth Estabrook | 44 |
| Photo | Carl Russo | 45 |
| My Own Best Friend | Freda Jayne | 46 |
| Love's Passion | Anita LeBlanc | 49 |
| Untitled Poem | E. LeBlanc | 49 |
| Art | E. Jacqueline Sakash | 50 |
| The War Poem #1 | Christopher John Stephens | 51 |
| The Music Box | Mickey Richardson | 51 |
| Why? | Craig Quimby | 52 |
| Dialogues of a Pathomaniac Doctor and a Miscible King | Gary G. Yannalfo | 53 |
| Strangers | Jean Elardo | 54 |
| I'm on Hold | Beth Estabrook | 55 |
| The Prize-Winning Poem | | 56 |
| Cover Photo by Carl Russo | | |

Love Me for Today

I'll never say I love You
I'll never say I care
I won't always be there
we'll never grow near
it's just my lonely play
love me for today.

Love me for today
as if there's no tomorrow.
Love me for today
never feel no sorrow.

Morning now
who are you again
what's your name again
I seem to find
it's slipped my mind.
I thought we could talk a while
and I could make you smile
but if you gotta go
I don't have to know
that ain't my way.
All I usually say is
love me for today.

Love me for today
as if there's no tomorrow.
Love me for today
never feel no sorrow.

Hello, yes it's me again
I know we made a deal
and I'm not supposed to feel
any love for you.
I thought we could grow near
and I would wanna be there
But if you say not
I'll forget I had the thought
I'll go back and find someone new
and I'll just have to say
love me for today

Love me for today
as if there's no tomorrow.
Love me for today
never feel no sorrow.

I'll never say I love you
I'll never say I care
I won't always be there
we'll never grow near
it's just my lonely play
love me for today.

- Jeffrey Driscoll

Jack Frost Will Get You

Cold winter's night
Bed - warm, soft and snuggly

Sleep quickly ----
Before darkness gets you

Dawn's early light softly fills the room
Sifting in through frosted windowpane

Blue eyes open --
Light on sister's teddy bear on shelf

Stillness through the house
Little feet touch the floor - reach out

Face - peering through windowpane
Long crooked nose - narrow ugly face

Hands reach out --

Oh please -- please
Don't take me!

- Annette Colson

Patrice

Patrice, who are you really?

I see bright blonde hair,
Big laughing brown eyes;
A willingness to help anyone.
Yet - who are you really?

A complex puzzle of deepest emotion,
The waters of your essence are never still;
You're a prism of constantly shifting moods.
But - who are you really?

The illuminating aura of your existence,
Out shines the fullest moon;
Though we've had years together --
Patrice - who are you - really?

- Donna Finocchiaro

THE SOMEDAY HOMEDAY BLUES IN A7th

I could be God in this white room
with a thousand baboons with leopards tatooed on their
faces. I said "Hey! You!" to one of them scurrying back
to the places where they hide. He stopped on New York to turn
around and said, "what,

What do you want?"

"I want to tell you a story" I said flippantly.
Apparently he did understand like nobody because he said
"A story about what?"

And I replied, "A story about a girl."

"Ya? A girl?" He asked patiently with a certain confusion...

We have traveled for just the first mile, a stop for a
breath and still a long five pulls to go. I rested quietly.

Spaceman slept the entire way, thinking about pregnant
ladies and stick-men selling loose joints.

And McGraw, pointing to the sky through cement clouds said,
"What place is this?"

Then the girl walked in and asked me for a smoke.

She drew the clouds with the lines of her eyes
and drew her smoke with the feather in her head. Well, we
talked about tanks and being three-dimensional and a certain
thickness drew us in.

She was like lovers in her airy mind, the things she
thought were high, you know.

"I wanna buy me a little gold bug from California and
park it 'neath a street lamp on the corner of Church and
Winchester," she said, "and I want ten tall Indians without
feathers to stand all around it."

But then it became 64 degrees at the Truth Serum Center
and the She said she was going to the stone and gotta ride.
But she was only walking.

So I ran. I ran like I never ran before. I ran
but the battlements were littered and I smashed out the
window at Cortelle's.

And people wonder why there's crime. They're so
stupid they never saw me again.

Well I got back o.k. and I found you buying Christmas gifts for people you can't like. And you said to me, "Welcome to the real world."

So I split. Along the way I met a man from someplace who was looking for a phone in my head. I had a dime but something inside told me not to.

So I didn't.

The girl was still a trip, though.

A restful heart would be nice.

Don Hayes, Bill Gleed, Chris Daly

Rainbow

I found a rainbow
Inside the rain
A thousand colors
Was her only name
She had pain, she had love,
She had everything
Except herself
And all she wanted was a friend

She was blue and green,
She was red
"But I'm not anything"
She always said
Made me laugh, made me cry,
Made me feel the pain
Of loneliness
I never knew if she were real

But then inside her
I saw myself
As someone else
That I used to be
She would smile, she would dance,
Then she'd fade away
Because a rainbow
Only lives inside the rain

-Dan Lyons

Sunsets

The sunset heralds the end of a day and the promise of the night to come. Sunsets run from spectacular to quiet and dignified. They have inspired song writers and poets in lyrics and prose, and artists' vivid splashing of colors upon canvas. For centuries sunsets have inspired man to create.

Mountain sunsets are quiet, graceful and dignified. The sun relinquishes its glory slowly as it slides serenely down the broad back of the mountain. The sun, drawing the velvety blackness of night with it, disappears. This, to me, is like a great Shakespearean actor exiting the stage but to return again in glory.

Sunsets at the beach are brilliant and colorful. These sunsets fill the eyes, the nose and the ears to overflowing. This huge globe of fire disappearing into a glassy mirrored ocean, flinging multi-hued rays to the far horizons, fills my eyes. My nose feasts on the cool salt tang of the ocean breeze. Listen! My ears hear the distant cry of the gulls as they bid farewell to the diminishing giant.

Sunsets can be private or shared with someone loved. You can make of sunsets what you need or dream. Watch a sunset and let your senses run free, shaping this one just for you. Sunsets are God's promise that there will be a tomorrow. Each promise, as it is fulfilled, blends with the next sunset, tying them together in an eternal reign of sunsets. Unless man, in his search for power, alienates this covenant with nature and God, banishing sunsets to the memory of a few.

J. L. Barnhart

St Anne's


Stiff, starched, stark-white collars and cuffs
Wore red, raw rings in tender necks and wrists.
And everyone looked alike -- pale and pasty.
Cold chalky cocoa and limp toast,
Thick pea soup with greasy pallor
And everyone ate the same meal -- if they could eat it.
Dusty, concrete playground with too little equipment,
Squeaky, stiff merry-go-round that looked like
it might be fun,
But everyone always beat me to it.
Rows and rows of beds with white, thin spreads,
Nothing pretty, no color, just one brown
bed frame after another
And everyone went to bed at the same time.
And the days and nights all seemed the same
Until summertime came
And everyone had to stay there
except my sisters and me.

- Mickie Richardson

A Dream

I had a dream last night.
What a beautiful dream it was.
I saw a crystal spring
Lined with green trees.
Above it flew a pure white dove.
I saw peace last night.
All the people of the world as one;
Creating a chain around the world
By joining hands. Love had won.
I saw the end of war last night.
Guns, all weapons of hate - destroyed.
Put in the ground and turned to dust
As should have been done before.
I had a dream last night.
So beautiful I had to cry.
Music filled the air, my soul took flight.
All forms of hate had died.
I wish the world shared this dream with me;
To cast war and hate from the lands.
Let love prevail and peace overcome
Before fire drowns the sea.

-Charlene Cortes



The Spider

Oh see the sun spider
Resting in her web
Vacant in her web
Until the snow
Has put its bed

She will wait for a time
And cast her web
Spun so intricately
Spun so fine

She will rise from her nest
To reach the tip of the sky
At its height
But she will return
To see what her web has churned
A tree with leaves
In which she has conformed

-Dennis John Lebel

To Grandmother's House

It stood, lopsided
High up on a plateau
In a rising mass of hills.
Dilapidated.
No paint.
No pavement around it,
Just mud.

Inside it was cramped.
Blankets between rooms
Instead of doors.
Dark and damp.
Only the kitchen was bright
With white cabinets
And porcelain.

She had a little owl-face.
My father had her eyes.
She wore too-tight dresses
That were blue sparkled
Like clumps of crystalline rocks.
She frightened me.

My father loomed in view,
Fixing things.
Unappreciated and misused.
Verbal break in the tension.
His rebuke,
Her cajole.
My mother hovered in the shadows,
I sat in the corner,
Waiting to leave.

-Faith Gillman

Birthday Blues

A small wire coiled tightly
awaiting a cold touch, and it shoots.
Why do scratches echo in the tide
and why can't we see what happens?
Oliver Twist says "We must pray to the clock"
We are all so feline
Our souls fly soon
but we'll meet again
the process must continue

The echo in the tide is now magnified
people disembark
the k-9 acquaintances pray to the plans
of existence.
The plants as one reach out to caress me

The trio convenes at noon.
Waiting, Why does my heart cause fear?
Colder than a trip in its newness, my eyes
close and I think.
Poor Jack Frost has come all this way
to be ridiculed.

Choose your color
for if they merge
we die.
Water flows so loudly
Russians let in
not out
Sore and crucified was I in the past
only to live again.
The squares in my head are black and white
which are true?

Warm wet exhales crawl up my arm
The morning is strange
and remorseful
Blood still caked under his fingernails
longest party on record.
62 Days
but my pen has fallen.

-Chris Daly

Robert

Sibling rivalry. I never really had a chance to find out about that. My brother is eight years my senior, my sister, ten years older. We're more like cousins or aunts than sisters and brothers. I had a little brother but he died at nine months.

I used to come home from kindergarten and drag out my tissue box of special things. It contained all the old junk that was lying around the house. I played with it and my brother. Actually I entertained him. I had empty spools and broken watches, seashells and coils from pen insides. I rigged up little machines that turned and wiggled and usually fell apart. He would giggle and pull my hair and try to grab the things from my hands. I didn't let him, he was too little.

He was just starting to walk in a walker. I used to push him all over. I'd go fast, faster until sometimes we fell over. But he never got hurt. My mother used to tell me to be careful, he's only little.

He liked to listen to my sister play the piano. He would sit quiet and still and coo whenever she played. I used to get jealous I guess and try to attract his attention. He had a big pink rabbit that was full of air and had bells that jingled when you shook it. I used to shake it around whenever he got too interested in my sister. He would zoom across the room to get it. I always thought he looked like a secretary or a bank manager rolling a desk chair from the desk to a file cabinet, like they do when they have forms for you to fill out.

I don't remember much about his getting sick. I just can see my mother rocking him in a chair in her bedroom. He drank a lot of apple juice and his cheeks were bright red. My mother looked worried. But I didn't worry because she worried a lot. No one knew what was wrong at first and when they figured it out it was too late.

When we were out at a department store a woman with long fingernails accidentally scratched him. She was a carrier of spinal meningitis. I'm sure she didn't know. If she did I think she would have at least cut her fingernails. He went into the hospital. I never got to see him live again. He died ten days later on my mother's birthday. I cried a lot.

At the funeral they made me look at him. I was scared and I got sick. They thought I had meningitis too. I didn't. They discovered it was psychosomatic. They said it was because I was grieving. I didn't know it was grieving then. I was too little. He would be twenty now. I know we would have fought but I think we would have been friends.

- Faith Gillman

BLONDES

I walk into a club and hear,
"Hi baby - what's doin'?" he grins foolishly.
"Wouldn't you like to know!" I think to me,
Keep on walking - is everyone drunk?

The multicolored lights pulsate with a wild rhythm,
The D.J. looks good - but slightly glassy eyed,
Bodies on the dance floor swaying seductively,
To the blood pounding beat of a great tune.

A couple of awesome hunks hover near the door,
Watching and waiting - ever ready to pounce,
On some poor unsuspecting young blonde.
I've never seen so many "**blondes!**"

The best part of the night is watching,
The guys trying to score and not getting anywhere!
I watch as one staggers over,
"You wanna dance?" he's still grinning foolishly.

I toss my burnett mane over my shoulder,
"Sorry, honey, you're not a blonde!"
I throw as a passing comment,
As I walk off with a blonde giant!

-Donna Finocchiaro



The Fate of the Burgundy Waters*

by Nancy J. Robinson

The late afternoon sun dipped low on the western horizon, suffusing the entire three miles of beach in a red glow that created a strange aura over the young woman huddled in the sand. A light breeze swept over the beach and the woman raised her face and sighed deeply. She made a move to reach for her slippers, but stopped in mid-air to watch the streaming arch of seagulls soaring overhead. Once again, she sighed and allowed herself to sink onto the sand as she watched the birds pass by.

Above her, standing on the lanai of the large Oahu beach house, Marcus Trepangier watched his wife beneath lowered lids. The muscles in his lean, clean shaven jaw tensed as he observed the white blur of a letter clutched in her hand. It had been an error of judgment to allow Linnet to stop her volunteer work as she had. He should have insisted that she continue to assist at the day care center. After all, it was six months since the death of their only child, Adam. She should work with other children and learn to accept the loss of the child. Marcus ran a sun-bronzed hand through his thatch of wheat-colored hair and groaned inwardly.

Why couldn't Linnet turn to him? Couldn't she see that the loss of their only son was as painful for him as it was for her? Had the spirit left her the same time the breath left Adam's body?

Marcus called to her and waved. Linnet turned her gaze from the sky and stared at him with her large, amber eyes. She frowned and struggled to her feet on the warm sand. Marcus watched her with apprehension. If her once spirited steps were now a quiet shuffle through the sand, she did not seem to notice. If she could remember many months back to her joyful cries when he returned from the mainland, she did not seem to care. Linnet's only thought was of Adam. His world was her existence, his eternity her fate. Her face was pale, her eyes vacant, and her mind and soul were locked away inside her grief. She appeared to be lost in her own world of lunacy.

When she reached him, he wrapped his arm around her waist and bent to kiss her, but she pulled away. Marcus rolled his eyes and stalked into the house. She followed him in and stood by the window as she watched him pour a snifter of brandy. He stared at her angrily.

"That was a real fine welcome, Linnet," he said, trying without success to tame his flaring temper. "I spend two weeks on the mainland attending meeting after meeting and come home to find that not only has my wife dismissed all the servants and spent all her time either cleaning Adam's room or sitting on the beach, but she also finds that she has not one word to say to me!" He exploded suddenly, then emptied the contents of his glass.

"Adam's room needed cleaning," Linnet murmured softly.

"For what?" Marcus bellowed. "Adam is dead!" Then, as a mixture of guilt and pity absorbed him, he said quietly. "Where is your christian belief, Linnet? Adam is not here anymore. Were you not taught that all children, including our son, find their place beside the Lord? Why can't you find solace in that? Our child is at peace."

Linnet stared at him with sad eyes and said nothing. Silence filled the room, broken only by the gentle lapping of the sea against the shoreline. The ring of the telephone startled Linnet, but she made no move to answer it. Marcus strode into the study, slammed the door behind him, and within a few moments all was quiet.

Linnet leaned against the window and stared at the sea. Her mind was filled with anxiety. Where was Adam? How could his governess keep him out so late? She began to search the beach for their shadowy forms in the deepening twilight, but Marcus emerged from the study, jangling the keys of the Alfa Romero in his hand. He looked at her and grinned, his mood obviously much improved.

"I forgot all about Joey," he said happily. Linnet stared blankly at him. "You do remember our nephew, don't you? Well, Jolenne and Michael will be leaving for the airport soon--they're going on a cruise and we're going to take care of Joey while they're gone!"

When her expression didn't change, he sighed. Marcus had hoped, when he asked his brother three weeks ago if he and Linnet could take care of the child, that Linnet would look forward to it.

"I'll be back in a few minutes. Haleiwa isn't that far away," he said as he walked towards the door.

Linnet turned towards the window and stared at the water...

The deep laugh of a man, and high, metallic child's giggle filtered through the house. Linnet turned away from her vigil at the window in time to see a blonde child perched upon her husband's shoulder. She let out a cry of relief and ran towards them. When she reached them, she gently lifted the child off his shoulders.

"Oh Adam, honey! I was so worried about you!" Linnet cried, as she hugged the three year old to her breast. "You wait until I talk to that governess of yours! She should know better than to keep you out this late! Now, where have you been?"

Marcus looked at his wife in amazement and pulled the child from her arms. "Joey, why don't you go out onto the lanai and have a look at our new kittens, okay? Here, I'll turn on the light for you," he said, walking to the door.

Joey looked from Marcus to Linnet quizzically, and then shrugged his shoulders and skipped to the door.

As the child disappeared behind the door, Marcus turned and placed his hands on his wife's shoulder. "Linnet," he said, "that's not Adam, but your nephew Joey! He looks a lot like Adam, I know, but Adam..." Marcus looked down, dropping his hands from her shoulders, unable to finish the sentence.

But Linnet was staring at him, not understanding his words, much less his sorrow. "What are you talking about, Marcus?" she said, her voice edging toward hysteria. "That's my Adam..."

"No, Linnet, come to the window and see, that's Joey, not Adam!"

"No..."

The child stared up at the sky, wondering silently why it was blue. A thought dawned on him and he eagerly accepted it. It was a sky as blue as the sea. Yes, he thought, the sky and the sea were the same. He stared at the sea, viewing with a child's wonder, the unknown. He had never been allowed near the water at home, not even to wade in it. Not even to feel its wetness or taste its salty flavor...he stood straight and began walking towards the white beach gleaming underneath the full moon.

Both Marcus and Linnet saw him go, but Linnet jumped to her feet first. As Marcus stood to join her, she whirled and faced him with stormy eyes.

"I'll get him!" She screamed. "You almost let him drown the last time..."

Marcus stared at her as she ran from the house. She really thought it was Adam! But Adam...he's dead...Joey only resembles him! She blames me, Marcus thought wildly. It wasn't my fault. It wasn't my fault, his mind screamed. She thinks I didn't try to stop Adam from drowning...but I did try, I did!

Trying to stop the horrible images creeping into his mind, he raised his hands to his face and tried to think clearly. After several moments, he dropped his hands, realizing that his wife was alone, on the beach, with the boy.

He ran from the house screeching, "Linnet, Linnet! Wait, wait for me!"

But Linnet had already reached the boy...

The house was a mixture of English Georgian and Spanish styles, unusual even for Oahu's eccentric Enchanted Lakes Region, located in the suburban town of Kailua. Unlike most of the regal estates nearby, its main doorway opened out into a walled-in courtyard. The lower portion of the house was of red brick, while the upper half behind the lanai was plastered in white. It was not considered an attractive house, but in essence, it was a symbol of the Trepangier wealth, even when displayed in so gaudy a fashion.

Inside the house, a large group of friends and relatives had gathered in the main salon to express their condolences to a young couple and a recently widowed man. The man, however, barely heard them when they spoke. He stared at his feet, his mouth set in a grim line as he clutched a white envelope in his hand.

Marcus had little memory of the accident. All he could see in his mind's eye was the burgundy water. Indeed, the vision haunted him day and night. His hand gripped the envelope tighter and his face grew pale as the vision once again gripped him.

Blood. It was everywhere. He shook his head, no, there wasn't any bloodshed...but the ocean was a deep burgundy color that night. Yes, and Linnet and Joey...oh God! Linnet hadn't tried to save the child after all...she dragged Joey into the depths of the waves with her. She'd held him close to her bosom and allowed the strong current to pull them under and carry them from the shore. He'd shouted to them, running into the crashing waves, but they were nowhere to be seen...

He stood suddenly and said softly, "She's gone, she's gone..." before he walked out of his parents' home and into the bright sunshine.

During the long drive from Kailua to Laie, the same vision flashed through his mind and flaunted itself before his eyes. First Adam, now Linnet and Joey. He tried to focus his blurred vision and concentrate on the road but his tortured emotions continued to engulf him. Nothing, it seemed, would ease the tightness in his chest and throat or the agony and anger he felt at losing his family, his beautiful wife and innocent son. The Kamehameha Highway twisted and turned in a pattern of circles as he neared Kaaahu. The bloody sea...Linnet...Adam...Joey.

Some time later, he sat on the beach bathed in a rainbow of pastel hues, a gift from the setting sun. The sea was calm now, lapping gently near his feet. Marcus was far too deep in thought to notice his surroundings; paradise, a mecca for sun worshippers and nature lovers alike, failed to instill his senses and make him see his worth clearly.

Marcus stared at the huge expanse of water before him. The air, heavy with moisture, was suffocating him. He eased down onto the sand and turned over on his belly, raising an ivory sheet of paper before his eyes. Tears of self-pity filled his eyes, preventing him from reading the scrawled message.

Several meters to the right lay an empty pill case. Once it had been filled with sleeping pills, which had been the family physician's answer to Linnent's grief. Further to the right, sparkling ominously in the colorful hues of the sun, lay a razor smeared with fresh blood.

His measures for a quick descent from life were rapidly sapping the man's strength. Marcus dropped the paper and eased his head onto the warm sand. His tears ceased and, not bothering to brush them away, strained his eyes to read the scrawled message on the paper.

The written words escaped him, for he was seeing double. But, it didn't matter, for inside his heart the words had forever been branded:

My Dearest Marcus,

As you read this I will most likely be with my son. Do not grieve for us, I'm, sure we shall be happy. My son has his mother and I am with my son, and you, I'm sure, will find another...

The last of Linnet's words pierced him like a knife - *find another...*

Marcus almost smiled when his eyelids grew too heavy to stay open. He closed them gratefully and waited to feel his last heartbeat as the scent of jasmine, his wife's favorite perfume, reached his nose.

His senses perked and suddenly, even through the fog in his mind, he realized what he was doing was wrong. Utilizing up the last of his strength, he slowly propped himself up on his elbow and struggled to drag himself along the fine, white sand.

Further down the beach, a young couple was staring at the pitiful form crawling in the sand. They exchanged glances and, keeping their hands clasped, started to run toward the figure, which from their angle appeared to be a half-drowned man crawling from the sea.

Marcus never saw them. When he finally reached the edge of the surf, his strength had left him and he collapsed, rolling several meters forward. He was unconscious when the undertow, famed for its incredible strength, began to pull him from the shore.

Out of breath, the couple reached the spot where they had seen the stricken man, and, seeing nothing, began to look around wildly. After several minutes, they discovered a scrawled note with the oddest of messages carefully scripted upon it. They puzzled over it for a moment, then the man laughed, telling his mate that the setting sun had been playing tricks on them. The woman laughed also before peering once again at the note and shrugging her shoulders. In a quick, fluid movement she had crumpled the note into a ball and, with her laughter echoing all along the beach, had flung it high into the air.

It landed at the edge of the water, where the undertow pulled it, bobbing up and down, far out to sea.

*A tragedy as defined by Aristotle in **The Poetics**.

My Father

When my joy went to sorrow,
You were there to remind me:
There is always tomorrow.

Throughout my life you made me see,
All of life's realities.
All my strength derived from you.
You were my father; my best friend too.

When in need, I always knew
There you'd be, just for me.
The memory of you will always be
In my heart for eternity.

Though the Lord has taken you;
I thank him, for he's made me see.
What a special father you were to me.

- Anita LeBlanc

Ten Year Old Soldier

Easily led and left for Dead
on a field of charred remains
the mines explode and the boys go home
ten years old

The fear of the black turbined mothers of destruction
does not exist
but his head untwists in disarray
for the bravery of the boys too young
to hear the eighty year old lies

Over the hill and into the mine fields
to clear it out
the children shout as they blow away
Dying the death of the mujahedin for the old fiend murderer

One million dead and the flies they bring
infest the place of holy see in Qum and Teheran
and let the old man see
but does he cry?

The faceless names of a mother's son
never to be older
a ten year old soldier
cannon fodder to an old man dying for a cause
and in the name of god
let him fight his own war!

-B. Gleed

Ssssst

Here she comes again
With that damn mop
If I don't watch out
She'll give me a swat
Now here she comes
From the other side
I don't even get a chance
To salvage my pride

What did I do to deserve
Treatment like this
I feel like I've fallen
Into a deep abyss

Maybe I'll crawl into
This little crack
If she don't see me
I won't get a whack

That woman, she just doesn't
Give you a chance to breathe
If this keeps up I'll
Definitely leave

If she comes near me
With that damn thing
I'm gonna get mad
And give her a sting

Good! She's gone away
For a little while
Now maybe I'll have
A chance to relax and smile

Yipes! Here she comes now
With a can of spray
Guess this is it, not
Even time to pray

Ssssst!

Obituary:

Oscar B. Hornet, age 41
succumbed today after a
fatal accident.

- Annette Colson

Childhood Reviewed

Childhood dreams, fantasies, laughter
tears, joy
I take these precious moments to heart
and relish them as men do gold.
So long ago, yet remembered well
Placing childhood memories in secret
boxes
To open on a summer day and flood my soul
with lights of glory.
Oh to laugh and sing the simple child's
prayer.
To love undaunted, to hear the praise and
love the song.
Has life of feeble worlds detracted me
from childhood glee?
I am a child renewed, once, twice, thrice
And always shall I be within my childhood
box
Where no one can rekindle those memories, oh
but me.

- Elizabeth Buckheit

Mary Jane

Hey Mary Jane
are you gonna let Me go
you know you make me slow
I just can't handle you anymore
Ah--You could dance in the sun on a summer day
give me dreams and make it seem to be so far away
just put me out of touch
and when I was a younger Man
I really had a thing for you
You were an aphrodesiac anphetamine
sugar coated in a magazine
smokey slow eyed magic girl
You were my friend
Still sometimes I want to breath free again
escape the ground
stop throwing good after bad
I've got to turn you down
so good-bye Mary Jane
But
stay in town
I may call you once again.

- B. Gleed

The Path

I hear myself speak.
But I alone heed.
Is this the path I seek?
Is it mine alone this
Gold path I can not
Touch with my feet?
Will it to myself lead?
God! Let this one be
For myself to meet me.

-J. L. Barnhart

Searching

Shadows roaming in the
Darkness of my soul,
Resting over old thoughts,
Calling names I want
to forget...
Now, answering questions
That were never asked,
My eyes want to see
Things I cannot see
(Why, Why me...?)
I want my hands to feel
Things I cannot reach
(No, they are not Dreams).
I want the howling of the wind
To be music to my ears
But nobody but me
Can hear its painful song.
I want to walk through
Paths of reality -
but they're only closed for me
Because I'm there Alone,
All by myself...

- M.V.G. D'Oleo

When Life is A Nightmare

As fifteen year old Larry got off the school bus alone, the gang in basketball jackets were laughing and talking up the big game against Central Friday night. Damn! Why couldn't he be a part of the action, get his hands on the ball, flash into the air and dunk the winning two. They didn't even notice him get off. Kids who were in the special class got pegged early as "retards" or "weirdos", unless they had something going for them like being great at basketball.

His worn sneakers kicked a Miller bottle across the rubbish-laden snow. It shattered into bits, like his broken life. Then he kicked an old bike and sent it careening into the gutter. His hands clenched and he dug his grimy nails into his own palms until they bled. Pain was no stranger: the inner pain of isolation has gnawed him since his mother had died of cancer ten years ago. His drunken father had beaten him until he passed out. He still hurt from the night he burned the beans and his father had thrown him into the toilet after the mess. He had nightmares of beatings, pain and humiliation. No one understood him, not that friggin' guidance counselor, not the gang and sometimes not even Miss Parker. She was not what he'd call a hot shot teacher, but okay.

As he trudged by the alley, he glimpsed the small blond girl playing with her kitten. All at once the years of subdued rage hit him. Why should she be happy when he was so miserable? Adrenalin surged, blood shot into his eyes. Someone other than Larry took over his actions. Blindly he lashed out, grabbed her from behind and threw her small frame against the old brick wall. For an instant her blanched face, terror-stricken eyes and ash curls froze before him. Then her animal cries bleated out and only enraged him more. He beat her until her last muffled moans were lost in the city's roar. That bitch of a mother had no right to die when he was so young! The female of the child melded madly into the lost mother. How could he be left with a man who beat him every time he did something dumb. This time he swung it was a male who seemed to be smashed.

A horn blast from the next corner jerked him to reality. With sudden revulsion he released his vice grip on the forty pounds of limp, now raw flesh, flinging her into the snow. Blood stained his Goodwill Nikes and jacket and stuck to his hands. Merciful shadows hid some of the ugliness.

The kid was so quiet! Dead? No! Jesus, what had he done! Hot urine ran down his leg as he ran, half falling, farther down the alley. He finally ducked into the cellar of his own tenement and raced up the rotting back stairs. His mind was a blur. He'd have to get rid of these clothes; that's it, get rid of them. Snakelike he stripped and put on a second skin. He stuffed them in with the rotten trash he was supposed to dump that morning, and wildly dashed down to the cellar again. He almost knocked over an old man who shuffled along the dimly lit hall.

He'd go back and cover her body. Maybe she'd freeze under the snow and be forgotten. Maybe he'd wake up and it would all be another nightmare. Wildly he ran, shovel in one hand and trash in the other out into the dark alley. The trash crashed into the common dumpster and a rat scuttled out.

Like a blind animal, Larry returned to the alley to cover the body. Cold stung his still young face and cut his hands as he shoveled snow over her thin still form. Jesus, how did all this happen? How could he get far away from all this? He hadn't meant to hurt anybody; it had all happened so fast.

A force other than his own got him to school Friday morning. His eyes avoided Miss Parker's as he slid vacantly into his seat. She noted he was off again, in his own distant world. Terror gripped him. That ghostly face haunted him. The nightmare persisted. He shivered from the cold of it all. Again, no one knew. No one cared. That jerk of a counselor! What did he know of tough days? Days? Nights? Forever!

Miss Parker came over and put her warm hand on his shoulder. Poor Larry, what misery hid behind those bag-rimmed eyes! Slowly years melted away and his mother's hand was again on his shoulder, telling him she cared, despite all his troubles. Hot tears flowed down his cheeks and foreign words gushed out. The world stood still as the bell rang on the blur of tears of the would-be basketball player and his young teacher.

Mary Aram

Weight Loss

- 118 They're back.
The feelings,
restless, unsettled.
- 117 I thought they'd died
of ignorance
by design
by desire
never to return.
- I must speak;
can't help myself
can't hold back.
- 116 I want to leave.
I think I have to leave.
- I'm so sorry.
How can I make myself
want to stay?
Can't you do something?
Can't **you** help?
- Go to a movie.
Hold hands/cold hands.
Say it will be alright.
Say it will pass.
Say anything,
but ignore it all.
- 115 Cold war
Misunderstandings
Strangers
Silent pleas.
- Anything.
- Anything?
Counsel us, please.
- 114 Back in time
a decade or more.
Like old photos
of people you used to know,
but lost touch with.
- 113 I didn't know who you wanted
me to be.
You were not who I wanted
you to be.
How sad.
- 112 Too late/we'll separate.
- Remember,
It's not you.
It's not him.
It's the relationship.
Should I be comforted by the thought?
- 111 Begin the division
of what was once addition.
Two couches, two dining rooms, three TV's.
Who'll get the bedroom set?
- 110 Three cats, one dog.
My only children.
And I'll leave them too,
because I have to leave.
- 109 My house; never my home.
Yes, I'll leave that, too.
- 108 Indecision
Fear
Pain
Confusion
Tears
- 107 The most serious offense:
Tell him of your fears and confusion.
Give him false hope.
Only to say, in the end,
that it really has to be.
- It's over.
- 106 New beginnings
High hopes
Excitement
Release
Free.
Free to be....
- 105 Settling in.
A home of my own.
My first home.
- 104 Volunteer
my life blood.
Almost sneak through
and then they ask,
"How much do you weigh?"
- God! I've lost that much?!

105 Sudden tears
from out of nowhere.

106 Invite the family
to my home.
Feel the first real pride.
This is me,
and it is good.

107 A night at the beach with friends.
Jean and Jack.
How kind of them to invite me
to share their evening.

108 Friends make all the difference.

109 Some lonely times.
New experiences.
Painful remembrances.
Sudden memories.

But, still and always, hope.

110 Anger equals recovery.
Recovery is in sight.

111 Why?
Why couldn't he...?
Why didn't I...?

If only...
If only he'd...
If only I'd...

112 Absolve yourself.

113 See him
after a time.
So sad, so hurt.
Still in pain.

But he will survive
without you.

To know this gives hope
that someday
he will do more than survive;
that someday
he will live and love again.

114 Reconciliation
with myself.

A long process,
well on its way
To being completed.

115 Meet a man/fall in love.
Handsome and kind.
Warm and loving.
Delight in love.

116 Fear of love.
Scared of love.
Life's lesson well learned.

117 Happiness
and contentment
and compatibility
exist
with him, my love.

118 I will trust in him.
A new life with him.
A Future.

- Marilyn M. Chenelle



DONNA
Partridge

The Clock

I'm not too young to understand
That Mama's very ill,
And I must live next door; but still,
I wish adults could try to see
That I, too, feel anxiety.
I think that she must die.
And soon.
Will it be tomorrow noon?
In secret dark of night I cry,
Less they think a child am I.
"God, why is Mama ill?
Did she do wrong?
Or was it me
That did some awful treachery.
If you would only make her well!
Don't send her where the angels dwell.
I hide my fears for no tomorrow.
Instead, I smile, and show no sorrow.

The days go by, and I to school
To learn stern teacher's golden rule,
To play at recess, children's games
Enduring boys who call me names.
But I won't tattle, I won't tell,
Would that send Mama right to Hell?
I smile instead and move along
And bravely sing a clever song.
The words are silent pleas for Him
To make my mother well again.

No school today, it's Saturday,
I'm allowed to see my mother,
But from a distance, at the door;
Near her bed I cannot hover.
I cannot raise my voice too much,
Must stay quiet as can be.
Can't she hear my frightened heart
Pounding inside of me?

A stranger, someone I don't know
Is lying there so still.
Her eyes upon me tell me, though
She hasn't lost her will.
I want to say, "I love you, Mom,
And please don't go away."
Those words hide in my fearful heart;
Instead of that I say: "Mama! ---
I learned to read the clock today."

- Beth Estabrook

How the Faces Have Changed

The splitting of atoms
is nothing to jest.
The man in the suit comes
swaggering out
and throws forth his chest.
Tell me sir please
"Where has my sun gone?"
She was here not long ago
now she's gone.
Matrix of our Universe
mind-blower of minds
Ruled by the great gray orb
she touches not the soul
as you shiver and chill.
Do you find yourself not stopping?
our backgrounds white
not blue
How the faces have changed!

-Chris Daly

Premonitions of Roses (A Dedication to Spring)

When the black hands
that once gripped the ribs,
and bosom and
the soul
are dissolving with the heaps
of white gloss, nothing and
no one can disturb but perhaps
our own fervency.

If the light still itches the
sandy eyes
sore
late at night
it is no longer discontentment
but an awakening to a muse
as pleasurable as watching
barefoot nymphets
dance
and goatmen play their bark flutes.

Cold earth I will to enclose my
feet on this morning
and rain to shower over the face
once drowned in manufactured soil.

The light is still on you past hours
as the pen runs away with you late
at night and they too - the little
people who carry the muse
still
as always
faceless and undefined
who fall deep into the mystery of it all
stand proud.

And I,
streamlined and salty, but never more
suspicious of winter's imbalance
am
Yellow and golden
and
rich in the death of the whiteness.
The drains fill and dry
like tears that welcome in the seducer of
the virginal bride to be.

I am barefoot
uncovered
raped by your virtue.
Butterflies run amok under my skin
on this day of premonitions
and
I have fallen
in early March when it can no longer be
a February tease.
My reciprocal has docked its boat....

- Carla Corcoran

"The Window"

My kitchen nook sets all
alone, apart from pan and pot
With hanging plants, a sunlit
pane, it is my favorite spot
The maple chairs and table, seem
perfect there somehow, and welcome
all who visit, to spend the time allowed
The rain in spring renews the earth,
and once again I see, the branches bud
the flowers bloom, in all their majesty
The children picnic just outside, they
hide and play pretend, their squeals of
joy and laughter, are carried on the wind
The cardinals and the humming birds
have made our trees their home
To hear them serenade at dusk, is
natures living poem
I watch the seasons as they change
and witness natures might
The maples stand like sentinals, when
shadows fall at night
Whoever designed this window, loved
looking out of doors, to view at will
the gifts of life, that God made mine
and yours

- Terry Rezendes

A Hero

Wayne is home from Germany for the month of August. He has served two terms of active duty in Viet Nam and has had his picture in the local papers several times. He is ready to feel like a hero but he sees a draft resisters poster picturing a braless chick saying "Girls say Yes to Boys who say No" and his wife tells him she's leaving him for one of the guys in the old gang.

He's bored. He can't go to the Barn Door where a lot of his old buddies hang out because that's where his wife told him about the other guy, and with the beer and the tension and the pain and the anger he smashed tables and chairs until they wrestled him down and threw him out. He can't ride bikes with the old gang because his wife sits behind someone else now. He doesn't have any work to do around the house since his wife's staying in it until they sell. He's at his mother's house until he goes back to Germany.

He drives around drinking beer and feeling horny and wondering what the hell he's going to tell his buddies back in Germany he did on his leave. "Gee, guys, I just rode around and beat off and, shit, had a great time, wish you were here."

He rides over the back roads from town to town, drinking beer and thinking. He and the guys used to drag race up these roads; that pond's where they skinny-dipped and drank beer around an open fire on summer nights; over there is where he and his wife made it for the first time, in the back seat of his father's car. He'd been sure his father could smell sex, so he'd driven around with the windows open before going home.

He is glad his father had been alive to see him defend his country. He feels angry when he thinks about his father dying so young and so suddenly, last April. Flying home for the funeral was harder than any of his flights into battle. He tries not to think about it.

He gets in a lot of target practice down at the sand pits. He and his buddy Paul used to play army down there, seeing who could die the best. Paul always was better at falling down the sandpit after being shot to death, but Wayne never admitted it to him, back then. In eighth grade they both got BB guns for Christmas and shot at tin cans down there.

One evening Wayne is locking his rifles back into the alarmed trunk of his car and he decides to go visit Paul, see what the fuck ol' Paul is up to. Wayne had practically lived at Paul's house in seventh and eighth grade, and before that Paul's mother had been the neighborhood cub scout den mother for years. Paul had a nice looking sister, too, a sassy thing a few years younger than them. Yeah, he figured he'd drop in on old Paul, if he could find the house. Paul's parents had divorced when they were freshmen and he'd moved a few towns over to his step-father's house. It was across from some looney bin his uncle had been in years ago, out in the sticks, so Wayne figures he can find it.

Janice would be pretty if she lost ten pounds and stopped wearing glasses. In junior high she had been pretty. She had always had a boyfriend until this last year, her junior year in high school, when she went away to boarding school and gained twenty pounds by Christmas break. She had lost ten of it during the Spring semester, but the other ten is still with her.

She's in her room lifting seven pound princess dumb bells when the doorbell rings. She hears the dogs bark and her mother's loud sociable laugh. It's hot and her old yellow tee shirt is a little damp. Her hair is pulled back in a ponytail even though she detests her profile. How can I be sort of pretty from the front and so ugly from the side, she often wonders. She hates her nose.

She turns to look at herself sideways in the mirror. She's wearing the one pair of dugarees she thinks she looks all right in. She pulls her tee shirt up and sticks her belly out as far as she can, to look like a fat gross retard. She slumps her waist and shoulders to make as many fat rolls as she can. She had frozen waffles, toasted, drenched in butter and maple syrup, chocolate milk, and toast with butter, sugar and cinnamon for supper, and she feels full and fat.

"Oh, you're gross," she sneers at the mirror. "You ugly, fat disgusting thing." She grabs her stomach fat with both hands. "I wish I could just cut it all off with a knife."

Her mother throws open her door, without knocking, and says "Come out and see who's here, you'll never believe it!"

Janice pulls down her tee shirt and wipes the sweat from her forehead. She doesn't bother to pull her hair out of the ponytail.

"Janice, I'm sure you remember Wayne," her mother says. Her voice, as it often does, sounds too loud to Janice. "He's home on leave from the army and he stopped by to see us. I told him Paul lives in Boston now and doesn't come home much, but you sit and keep him company while I go fix up some cheese and crackers. Wayne, I'll get you a beer, I have some nice cold beer."

Wayne stands up to shake Janice's hand. He's a few inches taller than her and has a nice muscular body, with just the trace of a beer belly. His hair is too short, but he has beautiful blue eyes. "Hi Janice, it's nice to see you, it's been ages."

"Yeah," Janice says. Momentarily she feels embarrassed that her hair is pulled back and she's sweaty, but then, his hair is short and he's in the army, and he looks like a beery, and she doesn't really care. She flops onto the couch and pulls a cigarette from the pack of Old Golds on the table. Before she can pick up the matches Wayne has his lighter out and flaming. She leans forward and puffs her cigarette lit. "Thanks." She flops back against the couch. She scootches down and puts her bare feet on the table.

They small talk until her mother comes back with the cheese and crackers and beer. "Gee, thanks, Mrs. Clayton, I mean..." Wayne is used to calling her by her first husband's name.

"Oh, just call me Betty," her mother laughs.

"Well, thanks. I hope I'm not interrupting you or anything, dropping in like this."

"Oh, no, we weren't doing anything. I was just cleaning the kitchen and Janice was in her room lifting weights."

"Mom!" Janice says.

"Lifting weights, huh?" Wayne asks. "Let's see your muscle."

"Oh, forget it," Janice says. "You want a cigarette?"

"No, thanks, I don't smoke."

Janice takes a long drag and tries to blow smoke rings.

"I saw your picture in the paper last spring," Janice's mother says. "You saved a child from a speeding car, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"You were in before that, too, for something else, weren't you?"

"Well, I've had my picture in a few times for being in Nam, and another time I saved some kid's dog from an ice flow, stuff like that."

"Well," her mother laughs her loud laugh, "I guess you're quite the hero, aren't you?"

When Wayne gets up to leave Janice starts to stand up with him and her mother, but he says "I just want to talk to your mother alone for a minute." Janice sits back down and lights another cigarette. She pulls her hair out of the ponytail as soon as they're out of the room.

Before she finishes the cigarette Wayne returns. "I just wanted to ask your mother if it was OK if I ask her daughter out, so what do you think?" he says to her. "I haven't driven down the coast yet since I've been back, want to take in Rockport and Gloucester with me tomorrow?"

"Yeah, OK," Janice replies. She had sublet an apartment in Boston with two guys from school but the last two weeks she'd been at home because it was so hot in the city. She doesn't have a job and is bored. At least I won't eat, she thinks, spending all day with a guy. Maybe I'll lose some weight.

"Good, I'll pick you up around ten tomorrow morning."

"Yup."

He leaves and Janice's mother comes back into the room. "What do you think?" she asks Janice.

"I don't know."

"You don't have to go out with him, you know. He's not exactly your type, is he?"

"Oh, it'll be OK. I'm not doing anything anyway, except eating like a pig and getting fat."

"Janice!" her mother whines, "you are **not** fat, you're **thin**!"

Janice makes a face and goes back to her room.

They drive around in the car. Janice tells Wayne about her summer. It's been a brutal summer, but she hasn't told anyone.

Janice had been bored in Boston, and lonely. She didn't know anyone except her brother, who worked second shift, and her roommates, two guys who had just graduated from the boarding school she attended. At school she'd always put on a cool, tough act. She didn't know these guys well, and although they won't be returning to school she continues to act tough, partly because she isn't sure it **is** an act.

Janice walked a lot that summer in Boston. She walked miles and miles, sometimes late into the night. She was wounded and took refuge in being a child. She'd sit with her feet in the frog pond watching people in the common, she'd pile twigs and pebbles on the sidewalk, building childhood refuges, she'd twang sticks along chain link fences, and walk balanced atop walls.

One night she was walking on a low cement wall topped by a chain link fence, placing one foot in front of the other, and clinging to the fence. Half a block up a young man leaned against the fence. He did not move as she approached. When she reached him she did not speak, but continued along the wall by stepping across him. When she had one arm and one leg on either side of him he pulled her against his body and kissed her. They kissed for a long time and then he took her hand and led her to his apartment. It was a long walk and he talked to her but she did not reply.

At his apartment they screwed. It felt nice to be held. He thrust in her for a long time and she felt sore and waited for him to come. She was afraid of him but he was gentle. He held her and they slept.

She woke up before he did, wrote him a note, and left the building.

A few evenings later Janice returns to this man's apartment. He answers the door and looks embarrassed. Janice can see down the hall into the kitchen behind him. She sees an over-weight, unattractive woman standing at the sink, washing the dinner dishes. He tells Janice to wait and he goes into the kitchen and talks to this woman. He returns and walks Janice to a small park down the street. They sit on a bench screened by trees and bushes. "You write poetry," he says to her. "So you must speak, too."

"Yeah, I do," Janice says.

"You know who that was in my apartment?"

"No."

"My finacee."

They don't say anything more. It gets darker. He kisses her and she kisses him back. He unzips his fly and pulls his penis out while they kiss. Abruptly he pulls her face from his and pushes it down to his cock. She sucks his cock and he presses her head down and his penis seems so large and she wants him to hurry up and then finally he comes in her mouth.

He pulls her head up and pushes it away from him. He zips up his fly and stands. "Don't come back," he says, and walks away into the darkness.

A week later she walks to the block he lives on. It is late, two in the morning, and she has been walking since early evening. She passes his apartment building and sits on the curbstone. The night is bright with a full moon. She piles pebbles on the sidewalk, building formations.

A car full of people speeds by. The brakes squeal as it stops and quickly backs up. A tall man with a beard gets out, slams the door, and waves to his friends as the car speeds off.

He walks to the girl and sits beside her. She continues to pile the pebbles. She concentrates on them and does not look up. He moves closer. She piles her pebbles.

"Aren't you afraid of me?" he asks.

"No," she says, not looking up.

He moves closer so his leg is pressed against hers. "Don't you hate the city in the summer?"

"No."

"Wouldn't you rather be in the country, with the trees and maybe a lake?"

"No." She looks up at him. "If I wanted to be in the country, I would be. I want to be in the city. I like cement and tar and dust."

He puts his hand on her thigh. "You're not afraid of me?"

"No," she says, looking down at her pebbles.

He grabs her hand and stands up, pulling her up with him. He pulls her across the street, although she does not want to go with him. He pulls her into an apartment building, up the stairs. They enter an empty apartment and he pulls her up the stairs to the roof.

There is a mattress on the roof, behind the chimney. He pushes her onto it and pulls off her blouse, ripping it. He pulls off her sandals and her pants.

He fucks her and she waits for him to finish. He does not hold her gently, stroke her hair, or touch her face. When he finishes he sits up and lights a cigarette.

Janice stands up and wanders naked across the roof. She sees the cardboard plate from a large pizza, picks it up, and walks to the edge of the roof with it. She flings it off and watches it float down to the ground; it takes a graceful and a beautiful flight down.



Chapman

"What would you do if I jumped off the roof?" she calls back to him.

"Watch when the cops came, I guess."

"I'm only seventeen, you know."

"Well, I guess I'd get the hell out of here, then."

"Yeah," she says.

She goes back to the mattress and puts her clothes on. She walks down the stairs and through the empty apartment. She can hear him on the roof, dressing. She runs down the stairs. She hears him running above her. She bursts out the front door.

She is half a block away when he bursts out after her. She picks up a stick and runs it along the chain link fence. She forces herself to walk slowly, calmly; she clangs the stick against the fence. He stands on the building steps watching her.

"That's the way I love you best!" he yells after her.

She slowly walks to the end of the block. When she turns the corner she sits down and cries. She would not show the bastard that he had touched anything but her body, but here he cannot see her.

She gets up and starts the walk back to her apartment. She passes a parked car and sees a man slumped down in it, sleeping or dead. Suddenly she is terrified. She runs back to her apartment.

Wayne feels protective when Janice tells him. The anger that he has feels good. It has a direct target, it is acceptable. The anger he feels at his wife and his reception home dissipate his strength, making him feel weak and unsure. With this searing anger toward the rapist he feels strong and right.

"Poor baby," he says to Janice. "Let me hold you. I'm not going to hurt you, you can trust me. I'm not going to have sex with you. You've been used too often. You need a friend." He brushes the hair from her face and pulls her toward him. "Let me just hold you, baby."

They spend the rest of Wayne's leave together. At first Janice tests him; she cannot believe that he will not use her body. In her mother's living room she throws herself on him, kissing him passionately. He kisses her and then pulls her off to sit beside him. He holds her hand, entwining his fingers with hers.

Janice quickly loses ten pounds because she will not eat when she is with Wayne and they are often together. When they stop for lunch he orders a hamburg special, french fries and a large coke; she gets a large TAB. When they go for ice cream she gets a child size sherbert while he gets a thick chocolate frappe. The smaller Janice gets the more she feels that Wayne will be able to protect her from harm.

Their walks through the woods are not always peaceful. Sudden noises sometimes send Wayne to the height of attentiveness, and it is hard from him to let the adrenalin escape from his body.

Five days before Wayne is to leave for Germany he gets a call from his wife. She is pregnant. She is not sure if the baby is his or her boyfriend's. She is four months pregnant, and Wayne had been home for his father's funeral.

Wayne is late for his date with Janice that night. Janice is feeling vulnerable, thinking about Wayne leaving. That he is late makes her think he is getting tired of her. When he arrives she clings to him. He does not tell her why he is preoccupied.

They drive around. He stops at an old parking spot he knew from high school. She is clinging to him and he is not talking. Soon they are screwing, in the back seat of his car. It is furtive and quick and afterwards they both feel miserable. Wayne has not been able to live up to his idea of a hero and Janice feels betrayed, but guilty, too, as if it is her fault.

"You didn't enjoy that very much, did you?" Wayne asks her.

Janice begins to cry. "You know that man on the roof?" she says to Wayne. "You know what he said after he fucked me. He said, 'What's the matter, you frigid or something?'"

Janice is crying. Wayne moves to her, to hold her, but she pushes him away. He gets out of the car and slams the door. He walks quickly from the car. Janice lights a cigarette, and smokes, staring into space.

Wayne returns to the car. "I'm sorry!" he yells at her, "I'm sorry! What can I do?"

"Nothing," Janice replies in a sad, flat voice.

"Are you okay?" he asks her.

"It doesn't matter," she states in that flat voice.

"The fuck it doesn't matter! Are you okay?"

"Don't yell at me!" she screams at him. "It just doesn't matter, alright?" Suddenly she doubles over in pain, and clutches her stomach. Her crying is loud and ugly. There is silence only while she holds her breath before a long inhalation and more crying.

Wayne's fists are clenched tight in his lap. "Just talk to me, will you? Just stop, you're not doing yourself any good. Just stop, will you, you're just making things worse."

"I just want to die," Janice says. "I just wish I was dead, I just wish I was dead."

Wayne tries to hold her, but again she pushes him away. Now the anger comes back. It is not neat now, it does not feel like a hero's anger. It is large and raging, unreasonable.

"Alright! You wanna die? You wanna fucking die?" he yells at her. "Ok. OK. That's fine with me, that's fucking fine with me. My goddamned wife used to say that to me, 'Oh, Wayne, I'm so sad, I'm so depressed.' You know what I said to her? Same thing I'll say to you. You wanna die? Well go ahead. But don't fuck up! You wanna die, I got three rifles in the trunk of this car. You ask me and I'll give you one. I'll teach you how to load it, how to shoot it. I'll give it to you and you can blow your fucking brains out. OK? Anytime you want it, you just tell me. You shoot your brains out, shoot your pretty fucking face off. You do that, or you just shut the fuck up. Don't whine to me about this shit, just do it or shut the fuck up!"

Wayne's driving is fast, tense and ungraceful. At her house Janice gets out of the car, leaving the door open because she doesn't have the energy to shut it. Wayne reaches over and pulls it shut but he can't hear the slam above his anger, and it does not penetrate the silence of Janice's defeat.

Wayne does not call Janice before he goes back to Germany. At first she expects him to call. The unhappiness keeps her from eating and she loses a few more pounds. She begins to get ready for school, checking her class schedule for its final changes, going to buy clothes with her mother, and doesn't think much about Wayne. She's glad to be going back to school fifteen pounds lighter than when she left. She thinks about losing more weight, and how thin she can be if she really tries.

Wayne is eager to return to Germany. He is angry that he missed the athletes being killed in Munich. He views it as an opportunity for heroism lost.

In Wayne's mind two versions of this summer are true. He believes what he pictures himself telling the guys back in Germany. "Yeah, I hitched up with a real sexy chick, one of those hippy free-love types, sister of a guy I know. You know the type, on the pill and loves to ball." And in his heart he knows that he has been a hero. He has befriended Janice, protected her. He has not had sex with her, he has not used her. He has given her his hero's gift of courage and compassion.

- Jean Elardo

How to Give First Aid to a Murder Victim

First of all, ask the guy if he's hurt; if he says nothing and has a 3-inch bullet hole through his temple, there just may be a chance of him being dead.

But just to be safe, disinfect the bullet hole with bactine, place a bandaid over the wound, and cover him well with a white blanket or sheet.

Or if the hole is smaller and he says he's alive, then quickly put a tourniquet around his neck to stop the flow of blood to the wound. Tighten the tourniquet by slipping a stick, ruler, pencil or your finger into it and twist as far as possible till very tight. It won't be long before the victim feels no pain whatsoever.

Now stay calm and quickly call the ambulance. However, if the victim laying hunched back in the seat of his car with a hole in his skull happens to be in an ambulance, then leave him alone; most chances are he's had an extensive education in first aid treatment and you'd only be getting in the way.

- Craig Quimby

Ravine

Into the ravine
Pounding its paths
Running and thundering
Lost in a dream
Removed from surroundings
Wildly entranced
Racing through roles upon roles
Through the day
Lost in the fantasy
The joy of all joys
Into the ravine
Cooling ground and beaten path
Stillness, resting brings
And rustling leaves fall by my face
My flushed and fevered face
Cooling stillness while I rest
Upon the massed and matted loam
Streaking copper through treeptops tall
Decry my fears to me
(Which I have known all along)
The time has now flown
This day's dreams are gone
Very soon, very soon
I will have to go home

- Carole Banks

Did You Know That

my blood tickles. Today
It's spring.
And I can breathe once more.
Up the steps,
Across the walk. Then
You come up on my right and
You come up on my left and
One is now three. And
We walk in sync.
They're coming toward us now.
Quick!
Reach for your hip!
It's the shoot-out at OK Corral.
We pass.
It's gone.
It's Spring.

- Roseanne Kranz

Home Safe

I had no parties to go to last New Year's eve. I had just come back from a trip to Florida, and I hadn't called anyone to join in on their festivities. I didn't want to stay home, so I called Frania. She had the perfect family. Her father a successful lawyer, her mother active in politics and church affairs, her sister, Toni, an opera singer and friendly Frania, the baby (twenty-one years old!) attending Smith, all made the closest family I knew. Frania never stayed out late so she wouldn't worry her mother, she never went anywhere without calling her mother, and Frania still did not have her license because her mother drove her anywhere she wanted to go if Frania did not have a ride. I called my long-time school friend last New Year's eve to share the night with her family.

Their living room was lived in, with papers stacked high on the table and pillows lovingly tossed on the couch and floor. The Christmas tree, still up, glowed warmly though the tree itself was drying out. The table where we sat had been cleared off and set nicely with Waterford champagne glasses and Christmas napkins. The television played 'New Years at Times Square,' which we all agreed just wasn't the same without Guy Lombardo. We even got the pan of water ready to throw out the evil spirits on the count of midnight.

I saw the pan of water and drifted back three years to another New Year I'd spent there. That year, Frania, Toni, and I celebrated our own new year. As Guy Lombardo played on the set, Toni decided to tell our fortunes for the new year. She used an ordinary deck of cards. The Jack-of-Diamonds in combination turned up for me. A man would enter my life who would beguile me, and together we'd travel. Our fortunes were a game, excitement for three love-starved girls who had no place to go. We sang together: "While you're out paintin' the town, do you think I'm sittin' around waitin' on you. Now who's really the fool?" We munched on bon-bons and drank sweet, bubbly champagne that tickled our noses as we held our dixie cups up to our mouths. Promptly, on the count of midnight, all three of us ran to get the pan of water, Scrambling and spilling most of it, we managed to get to the door. With all the might of our sixth sense, we wished our evil spirits away with the water we threw out, each of us making sure we had a hold on the pan so it would work for us all. Silently, we watched the water trickle down the icy front steps; then, from within us, starting from our very toes arose laughing and giggling as if we really did throw away all the bad in our lives. We hugged each other.

Afterwards we sunk into the couch and listened to the music playing idly on the set, each in our own world. My thoughts turned homeward. Mom would be sleeping and dad was alone, probably snoozing in his crushed velvet chair with the foot stool. I should have been with them, but mom drove me away. I was an evil, selfish child who would never measure up to her standards. I, who was about to graduate from the Academy of Notre Dame with honors, who'd joined every activity possible, and worked in the roach-infested kitchens of the State Hospital, was a failure as a person in her eyes. I could do nothing right; I would never please her. I could not go home that night. Frania and Toni love me. I would stay.

"Have some more, Becky," said Frania's father, as he noticed my empty stare and nearly empty glass.

"No thank you, I'm all right."

"Nonsense, Blanche, fill her glass."

I agreed to the second Waterford of champagne, and once again toasted the new year, coming in only an hour. Their voices became distant as I gazed at the champagne bottle on the table. I had drunk champagne only two years ago. Actually, I wasn't supposed to that year; I was pregnant.

Linda and Berna, my sisters-in-law were over to my apartment in Yonkers. We lived in a big sutcco mansion in the downstairs. Our oversized bedroom had an oversized fireplace that couldn't be used; it was always cold, but I loved it anyway. Paul was on duty, as usual, and so his sisters were stuck with me until we could bring them home. We'd had our bags packed for two days, expecting Paul to come home so we could go back to Massachusetts in time for New Year. We had been disappointed four times so far by his delays and, though we still patiently waited, we had resigned ourselves to spending New Years at the apartment. I would not turn on the set. I would not watch people having a great time - just a short distance from my apartment, thinking also that my husband was probably one of them. We grew to expect the calls from Paul, postponing the trip "Just a few more hours."

Linda was sixteen and Berna was fourteen. I let them each have a toast of Asti Spumanti. We toasted the new year and my unborn baby. Awkwardly, due to my aching back and bulging stomach, I managed to get off my chair, hug them both, and 'race' to the door with my water-filled pan to throw out the evil spirits. Outside, you could see brightly lit apartments from dingy buildings. Jumbled music surrounded me as I stood staring at the stars on the crisp, clear night, tantalizing me with sounds of a life I did not know, but at least I wasn't home.

"Blanche, give s'more," slurred Frania's father.

"Oh, no, I really shouldn't."

"Nonsense, give her more."

"Frank, she does not want any more," Frania's large mother enunciated.

"Don't question me, just pour it."

Not wanting to start an argument, I again accepted another glass of champagne. I noticed menacing looks between Blanche and Frank. While Frania sat silently, Toni smiled and began joking about her father's small, one hundred and thirty pound, five foot, four inch frame.

"Your chest can't be more than twenty-seven inches...around!"

"Now Toni..." began Frank, as he poured himself another drink. He was interrupted by Grania.

"Yeah, I was Santa this year and dad sat on my lap! Want to see the pictures?"

"Of course."

She handed me the pictures. I absorbed myself in them with a smile painted on my face. I had never seen Frank like this before. I came to share their new year, not their secrets! I knew by Blanche's face that this happened much more than on a holiday. For this aggravation I could have stayed at home. I did not want my image of them shattered. I knew I could not escape it. Seeing Frank like this brought it all back to me. First the memories of drunk Paul and my failed marriage, then my home, now and before.

Only one year ago I'd spent New Years at home. Paul's financial irresponsibility and general neglect of me and our daughter had placed us there against my will, but I had not left him yet. Paul was on duty again, naturally. My father and I sat in our kitchen, a schizoid room with black and white cabinets and an orange table that might have been mistaken for modern except for the general state of disorder. The black and white bar cluttered with fruit, baskets, papers, ash trays, and other assorted paraphernalia left barely enough room for the small black and white television upon which "New Years at Times Square" played. The sewing machine and ironing board were in the kitchen also. Mom had to receive praise any time she engaged in creative works, and the most obvious place for attention is the kitchen. Dad was happy that year. His "little girl" and granddaughter were home. Tabitha slept peacefully and undisturbed upstairs. Everything here held memories for me, and being depressed that, again, my husband was away, made matters worse. More than that was the fact that I wasn't away. I stared at the sink as a memory of three years earlier took place in my mind's eye.

I was sixteen and a junior in high school. I sat doing my homework when I heard the familiar, heavy shuffle come from behind me. It continued as mother, in her usual state of drugged stupor, shuffled over to the sink and fell to her knees, heaving a long sigh and crying as if her very soul were being torn from her. Alone, I sat, an only child, no one else to care for me or tell me what I was seeing was really happening. A sick feeling rose from the pit of my stomach. I numbed and detached myself from the body called Becky. I had already grown used to the title of evil, selfish child and I sat, expecting the same lines. I expected her to tell me once again what a bad person I was and that I had caused her present state of mind. I was surprised that she'd come out of her bedroom now - for it had been about four months that she'd lay in there, day after day in the gloom of her dimly lit room, staring listlessly at the four walls, coming down only at night to pick at food like a pack rat, when she thought everyone was asleep. She'd declared herself in a catatonic state, which of course you could not declare if you were in one. Having been a doctor, she knew symptoms well and tortured us with them, a new sickness setting in after each time the doctors found her in good health. Another, so called, conversation from my loving, matronly martyr. I faced, but I was not prepared for, what followed.

As mom knelt by the sink sobbing, she turned to me and confessed eight abortions before her marriage to my father. I began to think that maybe this was causing her condition, maybe a confession, a purgation of her secrets would cure her, but she did not stop there. "You should have been the ninth." Impossible, I thought, for her to surprise me. Stunned, I sat and listened to how miserable her life was because of me. I couldn't be like everyone else's good daughters; I was evil and selfish. I cried, seeing her piteous, defeated form kneeling on the floor. I hugged her and promised I'd be good. "I love you; everything will be O.K....you'll see. I promise."

"A penny for your thoughts," said dad.

I had never told dad what happened that day. He didn't know about the abortions and I could not tell him what she said.

"Not much, too bad Guy isn't on anymore."

"Yeah, everyone dies sooner or later."

Not my mother! With all her illnesses she'd still live to be one hundred - if only to aggravate me! Naturally, it followed after I gave birth to Tabitha that she thought me an unfit mother. True, I'd married to escape my home, but deep inside me, the little Becky still wanted to please mommy. I wanted to give her a grandchild to make her happy and proud of me. I should have known. How can an evil, selfish child transform into a good responsible mother? Never mind that I'd kept my apartment clean and tidy, that I cooked and washed and ironed, that I never left my baby's side and that I'd done it all

alone in Yonkers, with no help from an absent husband or even a friend to talk to. Never mind all that! This evil, selfish child grew to be an evil, selfish mother who had been stupid enough to marry the irresponsible “boy” I called my husband.

“You do your best to make the baby hate me, but I don’t care. You’ll see me change like never before. You’ll have reason to hate me.”

Time and time again she threatened this. No such luck though, she would never change, and I couldn’t hate her more. How is it possible to make an infant hate someone? Whatever Tabitha did, she did it from no encouragement from me. In fact, it was quite the opposite, but it did not matter what I did as long as a thought ate at her brain.

“Happy New Year.” Dad kissed me.

“Happy New Year.” I ran to throw out the evil spirits. Seemed they just did not want to leave! Maybe if I used a barrel instead...!

Back to reality again, I looked at the clock. Fifteen minutes before the new year. Frank poured himself another drink. Blanche, Toni, and Frania sat playing with napkins and spoons. I did not want to be there any longer. I did not want to be with drunk Frank nor the family that was trying to pretend he wasn’t. The warmth of the tree turned cold, and the tree looked more dead than alive.

“I have to get home; dad is up alone and I should keep him company. I didn’t realize what time it was. Well, Happy New Year and thank you.”

I kissed them all and ran to my car. I sped home, arriving five minutes before midnight. I gave dad a kiss and hug, threw out my evil spirits and raced up the stairs to give sleeping Tabitha a kiss. At last - “Home safe.”

-Anonymous

With Love in Spring

It’s spring time
Flowers color the earth
Daffodils are blooming
Roses are sent to lovers
 expressing love given and spent
Sun shines and warms the land
 and bubbles the heart with love
Daisies polka dot gardens
Rain falls to feed and freshen life
 with a newness and cleanness
Peach pies are made to be shared
Come share this spring with me
 and I will show you what it is all about.

- Carolyn P. Reynolds

Baby Doll

It was the Christmas I finally stopped believing. In Santa Claus, and in mothers.

I had but one wish that year: a baby doll. Oh, I'd had dolls before, Barbie and any number of variations of that glamorous, stylish femme fatale. I dressed them all in the spiked heels and pastel cocktail dresses of that era, and pranced them around the floor of the small bedroom I shared with my two sisters. I even enjoyed the fantasies that accompanied this playtime, dreams of growing up and living the sophisticated, glamorous life I could only live then through Barbie. But at ten, I longed for a baby doll.

I was a remarkably quiet and undemanding child, accepting without complaint or question the expectations and dictates of my parents. It was beyond me to think of asking for something for myself, to speak of what I might like. Yet my longing that Christmas was so strong that I somehow found the words to ask - for my baby doll.

I asked Santa Claus. And, just to be sure, I asked my mother. As the youngest, I was tortured by my sisters and brother with terrible rumors that there was no Santa Claus. That couldn't be true; but, if what they said really was so, maybe (just maybe) mother would see to it that my wish came true.

I was filled with anticipation. Soon. Soon I'd have my very own baby doll. No more silky dresses and cleavage. No more Lennon Sisters paperdolls for me! I'd have a baby.

I daydreamed in the weeks before Christmas of feeding her (it had to be a her), holding her when she cried, and changing her tiny, soft outfits. Somehow I just knew she'd be a precious, lovely little baby.

I finally drifted off to sleep Christmas Eve, clinging to the hints and assurances mother had given in the past few weeks. I was sure Santa would arrive sometime during the night with 'her', and I'd wake to my little baby girl.

Christmas morning came and, sure enough, under the tree was the big box, the doll-sized box, with the tag that read, "To: Marilyn/From: Santa." Inches away from my baby doll was another, similar box which read, "To: Susan/From: Santa."

I don't remember what Susan had asked for that year. At thirteen, her animosity towards her pesky little sister would surely have kept her from confiding in me anyway. But I know it wasn't a baby doll. She had so many of them already and didn't even bother to play with but one or two.

Susan was quicker than I and ripped open her box before I'd even gotten to mine. Her's was...a baby doll!

I vaguely remember the looks that passed through the family at that moment. I recall feeling surprised that Susan, too, would get a baby doll, but I continued unwrapping what I knew would be one of my very own. I can only imagine how I looked when my gift was revealed.

My mother seemed embarrassed and startled. My father gave her condemning looks while she started to explain how Santa had somehow goofed. Only Susan had the nerve, or honesty, to say, "Mommy, you put the tags on the wrong boxes."

My doll was 24 inches tall with a bust that would rival Dolly Parton's, and she wore a garish black and red dance costume, complete with lace trim.

I named her Ellen, after my mother.

Mother was impressed that her little girl had named her doll after her. I wonder if she ever knew how much I hated that doll?

- Marilyn M. Chenelle



Coroner's Report on the Anatomy of a Beatlemaniac

by Kelly Sanborn

When I think back to my years in high school, I sometimes wonder how I ever survived those bitter days of non-conformity, anger and conflicting thoughts and emotions. These years saw many changes in my life, the most drastic of which was the break-up of my parents. This, along with so many other crushing blows, transformed an innocent, rather goofy adolescent into an "angry young woman" who walked with her shoulders hunched up and her head down, ready to lash out at anyone who dared challenge her. Although my mother still insists that these were "the best years of my life," as far as I'm concerned, my years in high school were one long fight against the world, and, even more importantly, against myself. There were four people, one in particular, who played a leading role in this teenage soap-opera: the Beatles and their leader, John Lennon. This rock and roll group, and especially Lennon, was the single driving force behind my behavior as a teenager, and their influence was so incredible that it shaped me into the person I am today.

When I first entered high school, I was a naive, religiously-oriented child who was "the epitomy of goodness" (a name a friend of mine jokingly gave me). I was anti-drugs, anti-alcohol, anti-sex, and a veritable health-food enthusiast, avoiding any contact with junk food or beverages containing drugs such as alcohol or caffeine. I worked stealthily toward my goal of a healthy, clean body and mind, and I carefully studied the Bible while simultaneously building my lifestyle on the writings herein. In May of 1979, however, this situation drastically changed when I heard a Beatles album at a friend's house. I suddenly realised how good they were, and from that moment on, I was lost in a world where the Beatles were the leaders and I was the follower, and from which it took me two years to escape.

Although I adored the Beatles as a group, there was one who particularly caught and held my interest: John Lennon. From the moment that I saw his face on that album cover back in May, I knew he was The One, the sole leader of this most intriguing rock group, and I knew by merely glancing at his bearded, spectacled, long-haired face that his genius was the source of the Beatles' immortal lyrics and melodies. After spending several months studying Lennon and his music, his influence began to seriously affect, and even damage, my personality and lifestyle. I began searching his lyrics for "the truth," and soon, each time I played a Lennon song, I felt enlightened. Suddenly, "my eyes were opened," and I became increasingly politically and socially motivated. I came to see the ugly side of politics, free enterprise and society in general. I became, in spirit, a member of the counter-culture that permeated our society during the sixties, constantly challenging "the system" and attempting to create a better world in which to live. I became very bitter and rebellious toward all authority figures, including my teachers, my parents and my boss. The world had somehow become a most loathsome place, and my life became a frantic struggle to survive within this new dogma by which I was so utterly entranced and fascinated. The fairy-tale world of my childhood was a lie, as I realised in John Lennon's lyrics and spoken words together, and whatever Lennon said had to be right. How could such a great man ever be wrong?

By the start of my junior year, I resembled in no way the naive, goody-goody, distinction student who had inhabited my body a mere year before. The situation was worsened when, in September of 1980, my father packed his bags and left us without one regret. The pain and hatred I felt during that time only deepened my involvement with Lennon, for he suffered the same way when his father deserted him as a small boy.

If there was anything that John Lennon symbolized, it was non-conformity. This theory was my life during my days of Beatlemania, and I went to great lengths to make sure that I was different from the rest of the student body at Haverhill High. I was so obsessed with this idea that by the time I was a junior, I had set up an elaborate series of unwritten laws by which I lived religiously: I was not allowed to participate in sports; I was not allowed to participate in activities reflecting school spirit; I was not allowed to wear a dress, nylons, high heels or anything remotely feminine; I was not allowed to look pretty or cute, for that wasn't "cool;" I was not allowed to be boy-crazy or participate in dating, for these were also feminine; I was not allowed to associate with any person or persons involved in the before-mentioned activities. There were times when I questioned the validity of these "unwritten laws," but, nevertheless, I followed them faithfully throughout the remainder of my years in high school.

On Tuesday, December 9, 1980, at 6:00 a.m., my mother woke me for school as she always did, but on this day, the morning routine had a new twist: my mother informed me that John Lennon had been murdered the night before. These words echoed the sound of my entire world crashing around me as I was robbed of the last element of my childhood. Something inside my snapped then; my anger at the world increased a hundred-fold, and I went wild as I never had before. I now sported Lennon t-shirts and round "National Health" glasses, and I even wore a hair-cut resembling the Beatles' trade-mark "mop-tops." In effect, I vicariously established myself as Lennon's

replacement, taking on his appearance and personality as easily as changing my clothes. My own personality was further destroyed by his, as his famous “I-couldn’t-care-less” philosophy of life became my own. Nothing was serious; life was a joke. I laughed away such serious problems as my failing grades, my family’s financial situation and the loss of my job. The sharp wit on which I pride myself today is the last existing remnant of this time period, and it is the one Lennon trait which I today feel is positive and constructive enough to keep.

I don’t know how it happened, but this mania eventually died down. It was as if being stricken by a long-running illness, then waking up one morning to find that the fever is finally gone. Now in my senior year of high school, I was finally at peace; Lennon’s ghost was exorcised from me forever. It all seemed so silly now. Thinking back, I could not identify the me of the present with that crazy character of just a few months before. This last year of high school was truly a happy one as a result; I did anything and everything I wanted, regardless of whether it was Lennon-like or not. For the first time in years, I was really happy, and I now look back at my senior year with fond memories.

An old adage states, “All good things must come to an end;” this was the case with my last year of high school. A stubborn tradition connected with the coming of graduation is the senior banquet, to which I was “fortunate” enough to be invited. There was one problem: I had to wear a dress. It had been **four years** since I’d worn a dress, and this idea terrified me. Nevertheless, I went about the task of buying a dress, nylons and shoes for this most historic (or was it hysterical?) occasion. On the night of the banquet, I was understandably nervous, but I bravely put on my ensemble for the evening and stood at the mirror, ready to face the metamorphosis of the century. When I had finally mustered the courage to open my eyes, I was amazed; I didn’t look too bad in a dress, and I discovered that I actually had a nice pair of legs. I was twirling around before the mirror, admiring myself, when in mid-spin, I caught sight of John Lennon’s picture hanging on an adjacent wall. As he stared down at me accusingly, I felt vaguely ashamed, but the sensation was curiously distant. I covered his eyes with my hand as I stepped into my high heels.

Images

Inside the mind
Ideas collide from side to side
Programming word packets
The appropriate response
For the next profound thought.

When no challenge exists
The kinesis is slow
And those packets just lag
In vague atrophy
Like an unfinished poem.

Thought catalyzes thought
And as each packet is used
Another boldly springs forth
In a molecular burst
Of expanding insight.

- Emily Reynolds

How Was I

What were you thinking?
As I sat there speaking,
Pretending to be expert -
Yet, so out of my league.
Were you proud of me?
Think I was courageous?
Were you surprised?
I love surprising people.
Did you sense my inexperience
My nervous quality?
Did you wish we were still together,
Or very relieved we weren’t?
Did you see me as a fool,
Playing way over my head?
I wish that you would tell me -
But, I can’t even ask.

- Emily Reynolds

Rebirth

Un Folding

Re Knowing

Ex Changing

Re Newing

De Ciding

Co Cooning

Re Flecting

Ex emptying

De Briefing

De Bunking

Re Gaining

Ex Ceeding.

- Roseanne Kranz

Writer's Block

Lame in thought,
The elementals spin in the cauldron.
Joining together and breaking apart
like a circle of tired dancers.
There are no new creations.
Old muses sit on dusty shelves.
Tea sits cold near
candles
Once boasting with flame.
Stale music and a deathly silence.
A wrinkled forehead and a
Blank page...

- Carla Corcoran

Beautiful Child

Beautiful Child,
What wonders I've seen
Watching you grow from a seed
Into the precious flower you are.
Can hands so small and delicate
Have the capacity to grasp
The world about you?
Can legs so soft and fragile
Still be so strong
As you revel in trying to stand?
Can eyes so young and innocent
See the beauty of colorful lights
Twinkling on a Christmas tree?
Can a face so beautifully naive
Express such glee in the miracle
Of a snowfall, or such wonder
In an encounter with Santa Claus?
Can a smile so wide
And a laughter so fresh and new
Fill a room with a sunshine and music
That makes others want to smile, too?
Yes, in watching you I've seen
Wonders such as these.
And beautiful child,
Your mother's sun,
You will never long for love.
Precious Child,
What wonders I'll see
In watching you grow.

- Charlene Cortes

A poem

Our spirits embrace
whenever we meet
And soar to heights
unknown
Our deepest feelings
not yet revealed
Are known to them
alone
Our hearts they read
when we're apart
And guard their secrets
well
Always faithful, ever true
These spirits of ours must be
for
If they love, and if they kiss
It's not for us to see.

- Terry Rezendes

My Name Is Michael

by John Michael Doggett

1.

The long black limousine pulled up in front of one, three-tenement house on a street of many. The day was cloudy gray and chill.

The back doors of the limousine opened and two men wearing black trench coats got out. They passed through the gate in the hurricane fence and up a few stairs to the front porch. One pushed the doorbell.

The face of a young lady appeared behind the curtain and disappeared. The men waited a few moments. Then, the lock clicked and the door opened in. A little boy walked through the portal wearing jeans and sneakers. The door slammed shut and one of the two men grabbed the little boy and carried him to the car. The boy's name was Michael. The limousine pulled away and not-surprised neighbor's faces disappeared from their windows.

Michael stood on the back seat of the car for two hours, watching the road roll away. He turned around, still standing and addressed the driver.

"Where are you taking me?"

The driver did not reply.

"Where are you taking me?"

The man on his left said,

"To a place for gifted children like yourself."

"When can I go home?" then, "I'm not gifted. Why are you taking me?"

"Michael, you know that the Special children's organization watches the school records of all children." Indeed, Michael did know and he knew that they had been founded to keep 'potentially dangerous' children secluded from society. They decided it would stop the accidents. Michael had seen them take several of his friends.

"It took us a while to catch **you**." The man went on, "But we did it! Do you remember the last test you had? It was an intelligence test. Clever eh?"

Michael did not reply. He knew what the test was when he saw it. He made his decision then, to take it. Michael had to find the others.

"What was my score?" He wanted to act as much like a child as he could; after all, these men didn't have any idea what he would be like.

"Two hundred and eighteen," the man said, as he reached over the seat. "Joe, wanta pull in that gas station for a minute?"

As the car swerved, the man said,

"Now don't try to run away, or this man will have to shoot you. Understand?"

The desert prison had four high cement walls and guard towers. A formidable structure, but inside was the castle, so named because it was a perfect duplication of a castle. It had bars on the windows. It was night now and one light played out from a third story window.

Dr. Adam Pendelton was worried; the paper work eased his mind. This new child worried him. His pretty secretary Susan Peters entered.

"Dr. Pendelton? Do you need me for anything else?"

"No, thank you. You can turn in now."

"You could use some rest yourself."

"There's too much going on in here to sleep now." He pointed to his head.

"The new child?"

"Yes."

"They picked him up yesterday. He's just abnormally bright. He hasn't displayed any other abilities."

"I know that, but we have to be careful. He could be the 'leader', the one we've been looking for."

"I don't understand. I thought we were looking for all 'special' children."

"Yes we are, but not for the obvious reason. Y'see, individually, the children we have couldn't do much damage before they were stopped and none of them is powerful enough to lead the other intelligently. So after awhile, research indicated that a new mutant would have to evolve. The leader."

"And any **new** child could be the one? What of the others? This 'leader' could already be among them."

"We don't think that is very likely. As you know, we have every child who has displayed any extraordinary abilities since the eight minute war. They have been tested and every subtle, sneaky trick that could be thought of was used to trip him up, if he was there and hiding. And until we can test this new one, I will worry."

"Well, I'm going to bed. See you in the morning," Sue said.

"Goodnight."

* * * * *

They had stopped to sleep three times by now and Michael noted that the terrain had changed considerably. It had become very hot, stifling in the car because his guards wouldn't open the windows.

They were in the desert now and had been driving on a long, straight road since morning. The highway just rolled on out of sight behind. The car turned off the road and drove for three hours.

The wall loomed up in the middle of the desert from nowhere. A monstrous iron gate was at its center; it looked much like the gate of a draw-bridge, except that it split and opened out instead of being lifted up.

Guards rushed up and opened the car doors. Michael was escorted inside, quickly.

A tall man in a white robe took charge of Michael once inside.

"You are Michael Herbert. Welcome to the Castle." He smiled. "My name is Adam Pendelton. We are going to give you something to eat and then perhaps some tests."

"O.K.," Michael replied, "I'm starved."

"How was your trip?"

"Tedious, although the company wasn't bad at all, except when they said they'd shoot me if I tried to run away."

"They said that because all of you are very important, Michael. The country needs you."

"They need us out of the way," Michael thought. He said, "Yes, I have read up on some of the research that has been done." They began to walk down the corridor.

"Any comments?" the doctor asked, not really expecting a reply.

"I don't think they proved much, the tests I mean, and there really wasn't any need for the barbaric torture of children, no matter what the excuse."

"What else could we do?" They had reached the cafeteria. Pendelton swung open the doors. Michael was still thinking as he walked through the food line and found a seat. The long tables were empty. All he could hear was the vague crashing of plates and silverware and pots back in the kitchen. He tried to scout the building but he couldn't keep up his concentration. Michael was too tired and hungry. There would be time later. He prepared for the tests.

Pendelton watched him eat, standing at the doorway. He smiled as Michael finished up.

Michael followed the doctor down the long hallway. Its tiled floor was so heavily waxed that the fluorescent ceiling lights reflected off it in a mass blur.

There were pictures on the walls, farm scenes mostly, depicting the changing seasons.

"This is your room." Pendelton turned left abruptly and inserted a key into a (massive) wooden door. Michael peered around the door frame to see his new residence. It was simply arranged and spartan. A bureau in the corner opposite the door, and the bed was situated between the bureau and the door. A desk with a swivel lamp and no dust! Pendelton stepped inside and said, arms folded, "I hope you like it. A nurse will be along shortly to give you a bath and later, you will meet the other children." A growing uneasiness made the doctor's forehead wrinkle as Michael sat on the bed facing the other wall, silent. Michael detested baths, especially with someone doting over him, telling him to scrub his ears. The door closed. Michael didn't notice; he was already upstairs now in the playroom with the other children, waiting.

Nurse Adams had been on duty for ten and a half hours and she was ready to drop. The day had begun with the children calling her fat Adams and smearing fingerpaint on her white smock. (She **was** chubby, but these children were cruel.) Her head ached. She felt relieved as the end of her shift approached. The phone rang. Her replacement, Janet O'Connors, 'the freckle-faced redhead that Pendelton always gawked at' called in sick. That left Adams to pull a double shift.

Her temper was short and she felt giddy. The children seemed tranquil now; maybe she could sneak an aspirin.

Then as Adams put her hand to her forehead, she saw the Grey girl sit bolt upright in her chair.

Robin Grey was a telikinetic and had been stooped over her play table staring at lettered rectangles of cardboard, spelling words without touching them.

Nurse Adams ran over to the little round table where Robin Grey sat. Adams watched the letters swirl and spell out something different.

"M...Y...N...A...M...E...I...S...M...I...C...H...A...E...L" "My name is Michael," Adams said. She ran back to her desk to the telephone.

"Get Pendelton. Emergency!" She went back to the round table and Robin Grey.

"Robin, would you go sit with Jimmy?" The little girl just sat and stared (emptily) away. There was a Polaroid in the nurses desk to confirm reports of odd behavior in the children. The film had already been loaded. Adams took pictures.

By now, all the children were sitting straight up, staring at nothing.

Down in his room, Michael saw the nurse taking pictures. He thought to the others, "Destroy the evidence."

2.

Upstairs was havoc for nurse Adams. She had taken all eight pictures and was looking at them for detail when they flew out of her hands. She chased them as they danced crazily around the room. Where was Pendelton? Her hand went to her head, pain, great pain. Adams collapsed, blood spotting the right side of her head and temple. A vein had broken in her brain.

Robin collected the photos and hid them in the heater ducting above the door. It wasn't easy to get the screen away. Concentrating with all her strength, she did it...at Michael's bidding.

She sat and messed her lettered pieces and the other children went back to their games, leaving the nurse's body in the middle of the floor.

Pendelton burst through the door. He looked at the children; they seemed peaceful enough, but where was Adams? Pendelton walked to the nurses desk looking for a note. As he turned around, he saw Adams lying on the floor. He walked over, bent down and picked up her wrist to take her pulse. There wasn't any. He walked back to the desk, picked up the telephone and dialed a number.

"Get a crew up to the playroom; Adams is dead. I want a complete autopsy." He sat behind the desk and watched the children. His nerves were all on red alert. What had happened? Did they do it? How?

"Jimmy, would you come over here?"

Jimmy Rothschild walked over. He knew what to do, Michael had told him.

"Jimmy, did you see what happened to nurse Adams?"

"Yes, sir. She had been holding her head for awhile and then she made a phone call for you. I guess she was sick. After she called you, she got up from the desk and walked around the room watching us. Then she walked up the middle aisle and fell down. That's it."

"Uh, thanks, Did she do anything else?"

"No, sir."

"O.K. Jimmy, you can return to your seat."

Pendelton went through the desk hoping, almost frightened, that he might find something he didn't want to. The camera was still in its place, but a roll of film was missing. He picked up the telephone a second time.

"Check on Michael Herbert."

The harried voice at the other end told him that Michael was raising a fuss in the washroom.

"Keep him there. I'll be there in a few minutes." The stretcher crew arrived and a replacement for nurse Adams.

"Nurse, after you take the body to the lab, come back up here for the rest of your shift. If anything happens, if they sneeze in the wrong direction, put another film in that camera. I want pictures of it. Understood?"

"Yes, sir."

Pendelton couldn't help worrying about the missing film as he walked downstairs to the basement washroom.

"Leave me alone you fat, old bitch!" Michael screamed. The nurse was horrified and soaked.

"There's no use in making it harder for yourself, Michael, and stop splashing; you can only soak me once. After that, I don't get any wetter, just more angry."

As the nurse bent to apply soap and scrub, the lights flickered and the brush flew out of her hand.

Michael heard footsteps in the corridor just outside the washroom door. It was Pendelton. Michael stopped splashing and flicking the lights. Pendelton came in, stern in countenance and said,

"What seems to be the problem, Michael? Don't you like taking a bath? I should think you'd welcome it after your trip."

"It isn't the bath that I object to. Rather, I object to being scrubbed by someone else. I am quite capable of getting **myself** clean." Michael looked indignant.

"Nurse, give him the soap and let him wash himself. You will stay, however, and see to it he does it right. When that is accomplished, bring him to my office."

"I will give you some tests then, Michael, and remember your ears..."

"Yes, sir." Michael replied as Pendelton smiled and left. The nurse handed him the bar of soap and said,

"Scrub!"

Pendelton walked to his room and ordered hot tea from the wall dispenser. He was in his underwear, ready for bed. A book that sat on his night table for the past few nights held no interest for him. He sighed. Did Adams death mean anything? He fell asleep. Michael's test answers came back to him, the words jumping from the sheet, clubbing him.

He awoke in a cold sweat, shaking. Something there, watching him in the dark. Pendelton switched the light on and ordered two sleepers from the wall dispenser. He decided that his nerves weren't meant for this type of work after all. He finally slept. Michael meeting the other children. They had shunned him. Why? He dreamed of vampires, with their little faces, open-mouthed fangs reaching out.

Michael lie awake in his bed, knowing it is going well.

The next morning brought Washington officials in their sterile suits and with equally bland personalities. The tall stocky one was looking down his nose and over his glasses, across Pendelton's desk.

"...so we've decided to bring the other children here by Friday and increase your staff."

"But why? There were reasons it was done that way! Safety! Do you have any idea what could happen? My staff is in need of relief as it is. One of them suffered a cerebral hemorrhage last night!" Pendelton steamed.

"There is no alternative, doctor. The taxpayers are screaming for our throats. Even the NAACP has gotten into the act. That's all there is, doctor. You will either accept the circumstances or resign. Good day." He and the silent other departed, leaving Pendelton to fume and worry and pace his office.

Susan Peters, when she wasn't taking dictation from Dr. Pendelton, took a shift in the playroom to ease the tension of the other nurses. Today she was filling in for Adams. She was very pretty in her white uniform and all the interns noticed and gawked, except the 'untouchable' Dr. Pendelton whose attention she had to work at to get. The children were quiet today, even Michael. Something odd about that one! He always played by himself. The other children ignored him, even Robin Grey who was a terrible flirt, even at her age. Sue decided to take a picture of Michael for the files, sitting alone. She waited sixty seconds and peeled back the messy sheet that covered the print. She was startled. She took another, tapped her fingers on the wooden desk top, peeled off the paper and stared. She had two pictures of a chair. There must be something wrong with the camera, she thought, and moved to pick up the telephone receiver. She remembered seeing the body of nurse Adams in the morgue and moved her hand quickly to the back of her head in an attempt at fixing her hair.

"Guard towers one and two report two school buses headed this way, sir." The intercom on Pendelton's desk never seemed to rest. He pushed a button beside the speaker and said,

"That will be the children from back East. Prepare dormitories B and C."

"Let's see. There are forty in B, so you had better make twenty-seven in C."

"It'll be done in twenty minutes, sir."

"Good. Have them brought to the auditorium when they arrive."

"Yes, sir."

Sweat dripped from Pendelton in the heat of the day. One hundred and eight of the freaks! What was he going to do? The temper of his staff was 'so' thin and now this! His stomach knotted and his face contorted. What would he do? Perhaps if he applied a little discipline...

It was a small auditorium - only sixty feet from door to stage. A small wooden podium was situated at center stage with brilliant lights above. One hundred and eight children waited there. Some were tired, some wide awake and restless, as children will be from time to time.

Pendelton walked out from stage left.

"Good evening, children. You have been brought to this special meeting to let you get acquainted with myself, some of the staff and the other children, as well as to tell you about some new rules.

First, any disobedience on your part will be punishable by time in the box. None of you know what the box is and, believe me, you don't want to. You will all be kept in your rooms for two weeks while your indoctrination and tests are conducted. You are forbidden to speak, except 'yes, sir' or 'no, sir' to the staff. That is all."

The children sat stunned, but silent. Pendelton smiled almost energetically. This would be easier than he thought!

Michael was there and he fumed. He remembered the story he had read about the Nazis and what they did to the Jews. Dr. Pendelton would have to go. Armed guards led them out of the auditorium and back to their rooms. Something would have to be done.

Michael sat on the edge of his bed, and when he knew that all of the others were in their rooms, he went to them. "Do not be afraid," he conveyed to them, "I will help you get through this. You want to know who I am. My name is Michael and I am what they are looking for, because I can help you. They are afraid of us and they will do anything they have to, to get me. Do not be afraid. While I am here, they cannot reach you. They will not hurt you. We will endure."

Michael watched their reactions. They began to fall asleep and he gave them dreams of what the morning would be. They would follow him. They **would** win after all.

It was harder for Michael than any of the others. He endured the grueling tests and tortures for them. He sweated when they would have, bruised and bled when they did. The others felt no pain, even when they were injured. Michael was also an empath-healer.

Michael answered the questions for them. He was with each of them and they knew what he was doing for them.

A series of taps on his door.

"Come in."

It was Pendelton.

"Your turn, Michael."

"Let's go." Michael knew there was no one to ease **his** pain.

"We'll begin with an intelligence test." smiled Pendelton. Pendelton hypnotized him, twisted him and beat him. Michael's anger got him through.

Pendelton was in his office. The tests had gone well. They had found nothing. Business as usual. He pushed the button on his intercom.

"Nurse Peters, would you come in, please?" The door opened. Sue came in and sat in the luxurious chair in front of his desk.

"Yes, sir?"

"How is everything going?"

"The Castle? Everything is running smoothly, now that we have a larger staff; even the tension has subsided."

"I meant the question in reference to you."

"Oh." She smiled.

"How is the Herbert boy?"

"Michael has been in his room for two days now. He'll be up and around in a day or two. Did you really have to be so rough?"

"Believe me, if I had my way, they'd all be dead," Pendelton seethed.

Michael lay in his bed, angry and in pain. He remembered how his mother had betrayed him by giving him to those men. He wished her heart would stop. He would be well soon. They had plenty of time.

Pendelton had just finished lunch and was returning to his office when Sue Peters ran up to him in the hall.

"I've got bad news Adam," she said, her voice low.

"What? What is it?" he asked.

"Michael's mother is dead."

They walked quickly up the stairs. They sat.

"Drink?" offered Pendelton as he poured a stiff, double scotch for himself from the wall dispenser.

"No, thank you. She died of a massive coronary."

"Did she have a history of heart trouble?"

"No, the usual child diseases, but that's all. Do you want to tell him, or shall I?"

"No. I don't want him to know," Pendelton said. "What's another dead freak producer? He's ours now and I don't want him to know." Pendelton was worried. Something was wrong. People just didn't drop dead without a reason. He would be working late tonight.

His telephone rang.

"I'll be right there."

"What happened?" asked Sue.

"There's been an accident. Jimmy Rivers has fallen down a flight of stairs. He died." They hurried to the basement stairs. The stretcher crew was there as well as the orderly who had witnessed the accident.

"What happened?" asked Pendelton as the stretcher went by and he lifted the sheet to look at the dead boy's face. The orderly was white.

"I was bringing linen down to be cleaned when I saw him slip. I couldn't get to him fast enough."

"Fill out a complete report and take a day off," Pendelton said, smiling.

"Thank you, sir."

No great loss, thought Pendelton. Now there was one less freak to worry about.

Michael sat up in his bed. Jimmy's disguise was perfect. He had even fooled Pendelton. They would bury the orderly, thinking it was Jimmy. Now the others! Michael knew that there weren't enough people in the staff for all the children to have new identities, but there were enough. Michael had picked a good disguise for Jimmy. The orderly who he looked like, had no family. The illusion was perfect.

Michael instructed the others. "We move tonight," he conveyed to them. Pendelton was his target. Michael smiled.

It was twenty of ten, and Pendelton was still in his office, sweating. Something was going on. His head hurt. It seemed to be getting worse. All he could hear was his heart. It pounded louder and louder in his ears. Someone knocked at the door. It opened. Michael came in.

"Die, Dr. Pendelton," he sneered.

Pendelton slumped to the floor. A trickle of blood appeared from the corner of his mouth. He was dead.

The funeral was held at midnight. A clergyman read from the Bible.

"Into your hands, Lord, we commend the spirit of your servant Michael Herbert."

Dr. Pendelton smiled.

Brief Honeymoon

Do You Cry?

What do you do
When the one that you love
Doesn't love you?
Do you cry?
What do you do,
When the walls and the ceiling
look the same?
Do you sigh,
With Depression that runs so deep,
You can't sleep?
And the sounds you hear, are only sounds
Of loneliness?
Do you cry?
Are the things you play too happy
for your mind that sits and cries inside
An empty room
Well, the rain doesn't help
I know that it
wasn't meant to be
but it still tears apart my heart
What do you do
When the rain falls so lightly
that it hurts?

- D. Hayes

They finally escaped the guests
On that big wedding day.
He brought his precious fishing gear,
She took her dog, Sachet.

Sachet, in Mona's lap, grew ill
From riding in the car,
But they were trapped in traffic;
So Sachet barfed on the tar.

The traffic cop who came just then
For dogs he held a grudge;
"For dumping refuse on the road
You'll go before the judge."

With haste they went along their way
To make up time they lost.
Tom didn't see the radar trap;
This time it's going to cost!

At last they reached their lakeside camp
Secluded in the trees.
Tom and Mona stepped their way
Into a nest of bees.

They made a run for shelter now,
Tom had to find his key;
But forgot it in his wedded haste,
A painful lapse of memory.

Tom broke a window in the camp
And got a nasty gash
For in his haste to get inside
Forgot the shards of glass.

Mona helped him to the car
And drove him off to seek
A hospital to treat his wounds.
Poor Tom admits defeat.

A shot of tetanus in the rear
And stitches for his cuts;
Tom left the hospital in pain,
Said "Marriage is for nuts."

The judge concurred, "This bond I break;
The facts are clear to me.
Annulment for this marriage is
The greatest remedy."

Just think of all the fun they missed
By calling marriage quits;
When we all know that **single** is
The bottom. It's the Pits!

- Beth Estabrook



My Own Best Friend

"Gee I -- arh well, o.k. Thank you Mrs. Briefy. Just please tell Shirley that I called and ... n-no message. Thank you anyway. Bye." My voice was shallow, and my blood was creeping in my veins as I stood, practically paralyzed, staring down at the phone. I wanted to deny the fact that I had just hung up on the last prospect for tonight. But how could I forget that I was alone, and it was Saturday night?

Last night I had stayed home by choice - eating popcorn and watching t.v. with my fifteen year old twin brothers and their mutual friend Larry. Today I hung around, cleaned a little, and read some old copies of 'Mademoiselle' magazines. I assumed that I'd be partying tonight, and I guess I was just resting up for it.

"Holly," yelled my mother from the front hall, "your father and I are leaving." Then she added: "have a good time tonight." I cringed inside. "Bye-bye Mom," I hollered sticking my head out of my bedroom door.

Then I sat down on my bed and tried to think of somebody to call. I had exhausted all possibilities already, and I knew it.

"This isn't really happening to me," I stated aloud. I was irritated that there was no one around to blame. The irony of it was that my usual Saturday night lamentations are the pressures of indecision. (Which date? Which party or club? How should I do my hair? What can I wear?)

Early this week one of my boy friends called and asked me to go out Saturday night.

"It's only Tuesday, Freddy," I replied jokingly. "The world could end tomorrow!" He laughed, but didn't call back.

Judy and Shirley had mysteriously disappeared for the evening. Joanne, Mike and Terri were having a party in the dorm. Just last night, Terri called and invited me. I declined because I wanted to stay in town to party.

Suzanne and Craig were going to 'dinner, a movie and drinks' with Patty and Jack. They asked me to go with Patty's brother Bill, but I didn't want to. (They act like old married couples when they go out.)

My best friend, Mary, was going to a fantastic party with a girl she met at work.

"...but it's invite only Hol, I'm sorry," spoke her tiny voice only a half hour ago on the phone.

Mary really wanted me to go, but what good were her sweet intentions doing me? None! So there I was - a pathetic soul - sitting on my bed looking blandly at the clock that already said 9:00. Each moment was endless, and the endless intervals filled up an eternally vast night. Saturday night.

"Oh how I envy your oblivion," I spoke to the clock. "You just keep ticking your life away! You... You..." I threw the rag doll that I was holding at it, taking my anxieties out at the ignorant objects. Lying back on my bed, I covered my face with a pillow and moaned and cursed.

I know! I'll go to Gatty's," I said into the pillow. Then I pictured myself walking into the crowded bar, smiling, laughing, and making conversation. With a friend that would be fun, but alone: no thanks.

Getting up suddenly, I tossed the pillow aside and went down the hall to my parent's room. They have a king size, heated water bed complete with vibrator and lots of fuzzy comforters. I sometimes wonder how they ever get up in the morning. But at that moment I only had one question to ponder: What to do tonight?

I squeezed my eyes shut and attempted to forget the sickening situation I was in. But I couldn't, because I ached inside.

I took a brush from my mother's bureau and looked into her mirror. Brushing my reddish-brown hair, I remembered how long I've patiently waited for it to reach my waist. But having attained the goal, I was bored with the look. I wanted to have it shaped into a modern style.

"You haven't got the guts!" laughed Mary when I told her once that I was getting it cut.

"It's beautiful, and you know it. Besides all your soft, pretty waves will become kinky, tight curls if you cut all the weight off." Mary was right. My kind of frizzy hair can only be worn long.

"And now is certainly not the time to make any drastic changes," I thought nervously as I eyed a pair of scissors on top of my mother's sewing basket. Before I got any crazy notions, I left their room and went downstairs.

I paced up and down the front hall. I went into the kitchen, the parlor and the t.v. room. I went into the bathroom and noted a large pile of laundry on the floor. For one insane minute, I thought about doing it. But the thought of carrying smelly sweat suits to the basement made me nauseous. So I left quickly.

I couldn't sit down; I couldn't stand still. I felt like a canary in a cage as I darted from room to room. Finally I managed to perch on the edge of the couch in the t.v. room. I turned the t.v. on with the remote control and began switching channels. I could hear Dad's voice saying: "Now that we've got cable maybe we'll see a little bit more of you Holly."

There was a movie on that I was interested in, but I had already seen it twice. None of the regular channels could entice me with their programs. "Video games?" I thought. "Sorry 'Pacman'." Sighing, I noticed that even the music channel had a 50's rock 'n' roll concert on. My parents love that stuff, because they grew up when it was 'new wave'. I've heard it my whole life, and I'm really sick of it now.

I pushed the off button and watched the picture fade rapidly away. I went through the swinging doors into the kitchen. I noticed the microwave. It said 9:27. I opened the refrigerator, saw the cheese cake, but grabbed an apple. Instinctively rubbing it on my sleeve, I went to the back door and parted the curtains of the window. I glimpsed up and noticed the star packed sky.

I must have been hypnotized by the galaxies above, because my heart skipped a beat when a loud ring ripped through the silent house.

"Oh God, Oh God thank you," I whispered trembling. Putting the glossy apple on the counter, I stood by the phone and waited. After the fourth ring, I picked up the receiver. I couldn't help but smile.

"Hello," I said slowly trying to sound calm.

"Is Kevin home?" my smile diminished, and my heart sank to my stomach and stayed there.

"No Larry, he and Keith went to the school dance," I said after taking a deep breath.

"Figures," he said sarcastically. "Hey," he continued, "you got a guy over there or something? It took you long enough to answer the phone. What were you doing? Huh?"

His attitude was typical. I usually take the boys in stride, but I didn't feel like kidding. I spoke coolly: "As a matter of fact, Larry, I'm alone tonight." His laughing was so goofy that I wanted to slam the receiver down on his ear. But I managed to keep control.

"Ha Ha Ha, likely story Holly, hey don't do anything I wouldn't do. Tell the guys I called huh?" I hung up, and for the second time that night, I found myself staring at a dead phone.

The canary was gone, and a newly captured lioness replaced her. My aimless wandering began again. I passed the coffee table and picked up a copy of a celebrity magazine. Flipping through it, I wondered if a starlet ever caught herself in a circumstance such as mine. Suddenly, I tossed the magazine aside and walked over to the picture window in the parlor. Peering out, again I noticed the clear starry night.

I turned from the window and pushed the power button of the stereo on. An old 'Springstein' song about being born to run was playing. The words and music gave me an utterly helpless and out-of-control feeling. I just stood there and listened.

"What am I missing tonight?" I wondered. And also I wondered if it was missing me. The song ended and I shut the stereo off. It was then that I knew I had to get out of the house.

I pulled on my vest and my down coat. Then I reached into the cupboard for my hat, scarf and mittens. I grabbed my key and went out. The wind made me glad that I had bundled up.

I walked down the street to my unknown destination. A car wizzed by, and for an instant, I could hear the loud blare of a stereo and laughing. They were just some kids partying, but it was as if they drove by to make me feel lonlier.

I continued walking. When I got to the end of the street, I hesitated and tried to decide which direction to take.

"Where am I going?" I said to myself. Then I realized how ridiculous it is to walk the streets on a freezing night with no where to go. I turned suddenly and almost bumped into a little silver 'Porche' that was at the stop sign.

Perturbed and startled, I grimaced at the very handsome man. But when his expression changed, I knew I was wrong. The man wasn't handsome; he was absolutely gorgeous! It was as if Heaven had sent an angel to my rescue. He was smiling. Everything inside of me slowed down, and I could do only one thing: smile back.

The glass of the car window smoothly disappeared into the door.

"Hey I'm sorry if I scared you," he said politely. "Could I give you a ride somewhere?"

I waited wondering what to say to the man. I wasn't certain if I should say yes, but I didn't want him to leave. I think I would have been happy just standing there staring at his perfect features all night. But I knew that immediate verbal communication was required.

"Sure," I said easily, and I moved toward the door. He had already opened it for me.

"Where are you going?" he inquired as I settled into the only other seat in the car.

"Oh no," I thought frantically. "What am I going to say?" I was amazed at the spontaneity of the action I had just taken. "Oh God," I prayed, "don't let me look like a lonely, desperate fool or worse: a prostitute." I wanted to open the door and make a run for it, but a totally sane part of me urged me to stay. So I simply told the truth.

"I was just out walking, because I was going crazy with boredom." I was surprised at how easily the words came out. Innocently, I smiled again.

"A beautiful lady alone? Where are all your boyfriends tonight?" His voice was gentle, and somehow I knew that he wasn't a lunatic.

"Everybody is busy tonight," I said honestly.

Then he turned to me and for the first time, I saw his eyes. They were black, with brown flecks, and they were stern and gentle at the same time. His manner was suave, yet sincere. I know he didn't intend to, but he was making me feel twelve instead of twenty.

"Would you like a Spanish coffee to warm you up?"

As hard as I tried, I couldn't suppress feelings of surprise and delight. How could I refuse? I had just told him how bored I was. I assumed that we'd go to Montego's (a well lit, but cozy lounge that served hot coffees as their speciality) and I couldn't think of a reason not to go. So I consented.

Though he drove fast, passing slow cars and shifting frequently, he handled the car with excellent skill. As he drove, we talked.

"My name is Charles, but please call me Chuck. And yours is?"

"Holly - Holly Jamerson. By the way where were **you** heading?"

He smiled; his eyes sparkled, and I noticed some lines shooting from the corners of them. He was mature, and I found that extremely attractive.

He told me that he had been on the way to the racquetball club 'to get in an hour or so of practice', but actually 'a hot drink sounded much more agreeable'. He also told me that he was thirty-four, divorced and that he owned and managed a business. I offered bits of information about myself, and he appeared to be very interested. But I wondered what could possibly intrigue such a fantastic man-of-the-world as him in me.

By the time we got to Montego's, I was relaxed. And by the time we were sipping our coffees, I was chattering away with ease. Chuck's attention kept me talking. When I realized that I was flirting, I was vaguely disturbed, though I didn't know why.

I began to joke about my self-induced lonely state. I ate the cherry off my second Spanish coffee and giggled.

"I could have gone to that college party or even to the movies, but I refused figuring something better would come along. I don't like to make plans too much ahead of time because it's more exciting to just let things happen." I paused to laugh and smile. "But this time nothing did."

Chuck acted oddly. He glanced down and then up, but he didn't look right at me as he had been.

"Well," he said looking past me, "I've never been called 'nothing' before."

I tried to catch his eye, but I couldn't. Suddenly I remembered the feelings that had enslaved me less than an hour ago. I was ready to leave.

"I'm sorry Chuck; I didn't mean to offend you. What I meant is that nothing would have happened if I hadn't actually gone looking for it."

Chuck was quiet, and I knew that he was thinking over what he wanted to say.

"Holly," this time he looked directly into my eyes, but his gentle voice was rather cool. "You can't always count on something to be there the moment you want it. It's a fact of life that when you need something or someone the most, it's not there for you. So I guess that everybody has to discover an emotional survival method to get themselves through the hard times."

Chuck was serious, and I knew that he was trying to be kind. Yet, I was somewhat stunned at his frankness. I took a deep breath.

"Oh I know that," I managed a smile. "I know."

On the way home, Chuck did most of the speaking. I hardly listened, but he didn't notice. While he was engrossed with explaining his computer business, I was painfully dwelling on the disturbance inside of me. A few strategically placed comments kept the conversation going. My thoughts were on his earlier words. I kept saying: 'emotional survival method' over and over in my mind. Where's mine? I wondered.

We pulled up in front of my house, and Chuck turned to me.

"Holly," he took my hand, "you are lovely to be with...I've never felt so comfortable with a woman I have just met. Please see me again."

I knew Chuck liked me; I liked him. But this time, I was the one dropping the eyes. Gulping back the lump that was forming in my throat I said: "I'm sorry, but no."

I felt as if I should make some kind of explanation. I couldn't lie, because I wasn't even sure of what the truth was. I looked at him finally. I felt awkward. Apparently resigned, he smiled.

"Well, I hope we meet again, Holly." His manner was formal, but I didn't detect any resentment. He must be using his emotional survival method, I thought. I wondered what it was.

I walked up the lawn. When I turned, I saw the tiny car drive away. I watched it until it was out of sight. "Bye," I said aloud.

Standing in my front yard, I thought about the night and realized that it had been a painful evening. I looked up into eternity. My head was pounding, and my chest felt heavy. I was taking small gasps for breaths. When the tears came, I remained standing in the darkness crying.

"I need somebody very much," I whimpered. The words hurt. I cried harder and thought: "I don't ever want to be lonely again. I have to find a friend - a best friend who'll understand and respect me. I need somebody who will always be there for me. Somebody dependable; someone who will be there for me early in the morning and late at night."

When I was all cried out, I sat down on the cold ground and looked up. The stars were still twinkling away. I usually take them for granted, but it was as if tonight they held a special message for me. I knew that I had to spend a lot more time alone. People have always been my emotional survival method. If I had troubles, I'd run straight to Mary or Terri or Freddy. But I learned tonight that I shouldn't depend on them so much, because they are only human.

I shivered and instinctively hugged myself. There is only one place that I can find such a friend, and I knew it. And as far as having an emotional survival method, well as long as I have the heavens to gaze up into, I'll be alright.

A ripple of pure joy went through my entire being.

"Well best friend," I said out loud, "we'd better go inside. I'm freezing!"

- Freda Jayne

Love's Passion

When in its enchantment,
The sun always shines,
The stars ever bright.
The days full of wonderment
Of those sensuous nights.
Eagerly awaiting your true loves passion.
So tender the touch;
The sweet kiss of love.
The tools of enchantment, so closely intertwined.
Oh may it linger, yet please let it climb,
Till what is yours, comes to be mine.

- Anita LeBlanc

Pasting on my favorite
smile,
I go to face the day,
A nonchalant illusion
Pretending the hurt away.
Somewhere, friendly faces
Will Alleviate My Sorrow -
Worries' intermission -
I'll save some for
Tomorrow

- E. LeBlanc



THE WAR POME #1

by Christopher John Stephens

Caspar comes home from the war factory sometimes. I don't wait up for him anymore because I can't depend on him, the war, or anything these days to remain consistent. The last time he came home was a few weeks ago and we didn't get much of a chance to talk. I hear him say that we're winning the battle and soon our boys can come home. I can only hope it's for real this time. A person can take just so many disappointments. We had a boy in the war. They say he's in the hospital now. We don't really know, seeing that he hasn't written in years. Sometimes, and I know it's terrible, but I find myself wishing he was dead. Caspar says that the reds are getting the best of us. He says that freedom is at stake, and however many deaths it may take, these boys will always be heroes. Frankly, I really don't know about that. He says that every battle has its martyrs, and that it all has a purpose. We're sending more troops down there any day now, he says. The only time he's ever happy is when he talks about how much progress we're making in stamping out communism and spreading the gospel of the gun when nothing else works. I try to be happy like him but I just can't get too excited about it these days. Maybe Caspar's right. Maybe I'm just not a true-blooded patriot. I don't know. I really just don't know anymore.

THE MUSIC BOX

by Mickie Richardson

Isn't it strange, how sometimes a treasure that we value the most, gets buried in a drawer or tucked away someplace and then one day, when it's the farthest thing from your mind, you come upon it? That's how it was with my music box.

It's **my** music box now, but it was given to my mother by my father when he returned from Germany at the end of W.W. II. He got it in Switzerland for her and I remember his handing her the package with layers and layers of blue, crinkly tissue paper all around it. He had it in both hands and it looked like nothing more than a giant wad of tissue paper. "Guess," he demanded of my mother. "Guess what it is."

"Oh, Fred!" I can still hear the exasperation in my mother's voice. He'd been making such a to-do about the surprises he had brought back that we were all on pins and needles wondering what they were. "You know I'm no good at guessing games!" she wailed. He smiled good-naturedly, gave in and handed it to her.

Would the paper never end? Finally she pulled from the tissue wad a lovely, round, cream-colored box. The cover had a hand-painted picture of lush greenery and a bubbly little stream with the Alps in the distance.

"Here," he reached for it and wound the silver key on the bottom. He set it back gently on her knees and touched his finger to his lips.

My sisters and I were on our knees in a split second, gathered around Mama's lap expectantly. I felt like an eternity passed before she lifted the cover and the music began.

"Shut your eyes," my father whispered. Obediently I squinched mine tightly and the most melodious sounds filled the air around me. A gentle rhythm, a happy rhythm, I could picture myself running along the foot of those Alps in the cover picture, bare feet splashing in that cool brook, water drops sparkling as they bounced onto my tanned cheeks and legs. I laughed aloud. The music ended.

"Wind it again! Wind it again!" my sisters and I clamored.

"We'll do it again later. Right now there are other surprises," my father said.

The music box held a very prominent place on my mother's bureau. I used to sit on the floor and listen to it while she sewed and when she was changing the bed she'd wind it up for me and I'd hum along with it or dance around the room. It always made me feel light-hearted.

My father became quite ill a couple of years after that. I was nine and he went to the hospital. I didn't understand what was wrong and Mama didn't want to talk about it much. Now when I played the music box, it made me cry because it reminded me of how much I missed him. How many, many times I relived the day of the surprises!

Just before springtime, my father died. A few months later we packed up all our things and moved back to New England. It was one apartment after another, always looking for a better place, more affordable rent, less crowded quarters, room to unpack everything. Then it was just Mama and me - my two sisters were grown-up and out of the house on their own.

I came home from school that Wednesday, Mama had Wednesday's off from work. There she was on the bedroom floor of our new apartment, surrounded by what looked like hundreds of boxes. "Well, what've we got here?" I asked curiously.

Half emptied boxes were everywhere. Protruding from one box I spied items of a summer wardrobe, long ago forgotten. "Well at least we have enough closet space this time so you can hang them all up," my mother said as I fished through the contents. "By the way, Mickie, that box on the pillow there has some things that should be of interest to you."

I cleared a spot and put the box on my lap. I pulled out my old Indian doll, the one the native had made just for me when we lived in New Mexico. I smoothed her wrinkled skirt and fixed her mussed-up hair before laying her aside. My jewelry box! The one I couldn't forget and never could find. Inside familiar pieces from a childhood that seemed like centuries ago; my "perfect attendance" pin from eighth grade, my Latin award from Freshman year, a pin shaped like a rose from Bobbie Murphy, my Sophomore love.

Mama was smiling as I reminisced, "ohing" and "ahing" as I came upon each missing treasure. I reached into the box again and there it was, all wrapped in tissue paper, the music box. I undid the paper and wound the silver key. I removed the cover and the music filled the room. When it finished playing Mama broke the silence and said, "It's yours now, Mickie. Your father used to say how much he loved to watch your face when the music box was playing. He often mentioned the day of the surprises when he was sick in the hospital. It was one of his happiest memories." She hugged me then and tissue away damp eyes.

My husband and I have moved twice in our marriage and each time the music box was packed lovingly in tissue paper until we arrived at our new destination. It now sits in a prominent place on **my** dresser. Sometimes when I'm changing the sheets, I wind it up and listen. Its lively melody still makes me happy and I can't help humming along. Once in a while the tears sting my eyes because the hurt never does quite go away. And if I didn't know better, sometimes I'd swear I could hear Daddy whispering, "Shut your eyes."

WHY?

Raging sound of clapping thunder shy verily away from the soft sharpness of the night's summer breeze. And like echoes of silence comes the hopeless answer to the question.

Where is love?, where is reality?, where are my needs?, and where do they meet?

How can love be so two sided? The pain waits sinisterly in the corner of my eye. Who do I see but she who I may never have. Honesty, dead, killed by the silence of fear. And yet somewhere does the light of hope shine. Perhaps tomorrow we will be together, if the wall between us crumbles with the passing of time. Oh, but no intelligent reason, no spiritual understanding, no bodily passion relieves the pain of love unexpressed and unfulfilled. Where am I in the Universe? I will search my shadow for the answer.

- Craig Quimby

Dialogues of a Pathomaniac Doctor and a Miscible King

(Entering the doctor's office Oedipus felt only dread and despair. He had been institutionalized because of his inability to care for himself.)

Sade: "Sit down Mr. Oedipus and please make yourself comfortable. We are here to help you as best we can. I realize this is our first of many meetings; but please, speak from your heart and spill your guts."

Oedipus: "Doctor, I realize I need help. If it were not for the blessing of God, I doubt I would still be around today. My life has been tragic from moment one. Shortly after birth I was cast into an orphanage. Later, I murdered my real father. Then, to top it off, I had copulation with my mother. As you can see I am blind - I did this to myself because I could not bear to see life as I saw it before. These truths and burdens have given me much pathos. My life has been one big regret. Doctor, I am a desperate man with no light in sight. My conscience is guilty."

Sade: "You are pathetic. Your moral convictions hold you back from enjoying life and life's pleasures. It is your God that blinds you and gives you your guilty conscience. Beyond conscience lies pleasure. We must live according to the madness that seduced us! Before the realization that it was your mother you had intercourse with, did you enjoy it?"

Oedipus: "Doctor, I know there is a right and a wrong, but yes! yes! I did enjoy sex with my mother - before the realization. I am ashamed to admit this. I didn't even think I could admit this to myself. I'll be cursed by God, for his wrath is mighty compared to us mere mortals."

Sade: "I place as much conviction in hell as I do in heaven; which is none. I believe in the eternal now, the immediate impression. Desire is our principle motivation. God is made our greatest fear. You must revolt against your god and everything he stands for. Look at you - a ragged, blind old man. I mock the dogma that has caused your regression. Wake-up!! Life must be eaten!! Pure pleasure and happiness will be found only when you break all ties with this idol."

(Thus Oedipus departed from this first meeting with Dr. DeSade. Seeing little sense in the doctor's philosophy, Oedipus did not look forward to his next weekly meeting.)

Oedipus: "Doctor, we have talked many hours during my stay here at Charenton. I came here at the end of my rope - nowhere to turn - nothing to live for - quite in despair."

Sade: "Yes, I can vividly recall that very first meeting with you. Oedipus, you were very mixed up. I must say you have come a long way since then."

Oedipus: "That is quite correct, doctor. Through these many meetings you have turned my thinking around. You gave me, the man who solved the 'riddle of the sphinx', the man who thought he knew everything, a new outlook on life. I was so unhappy with the way life was going for me, so very discontent. Now, as I walk through Charenton's gates today, I will start a new beginning."

Sade: "What has happened to that God-fearing man that felt such deep remorse and guilt for committing patricide and incest?"

Oedipus: "At first I was so ashamed for those deeds; I had sinned against (ha!) God and society. It is your ideology that I respect now. That is the light I was looking for. I can finally see why you have your sanity and happiness. I will start our revolution today - as soon as I walk through these gates, I will for the destruction and downfall of God!"

Sade: "Go, my friend. Make an uprising as has never been seen before - because you and I both know, man is his own God."

(Momentarily forgetting he was blind, Oedipus went with much fervor in reaching his goal. He stepped out of Charenton and was hit by a passing chariot, died, and went straight to hell - as we all know it. There he forever regretted that he wavered from his original beliefs.)

- Gary G. Yannalfo

STRANGERS

"She seemed determined to spend her life, without feeling, in the presence of strangers."

Mark Helprin, "A Vermont Tale"

My mother lies in a drift of snow, during a heavy storm, with her bottle of clear cold vodka. She has taken Quaaludes, also; again she wants to die.

My mother had lain in the stillness of drugged sleep for three days and when she surfaced, splashing through, coughing up the endotracheal tube in a gurgle of sputum, she screamed my name, digging her teeth, for a strong hold, into my jugular vein.

I tried to die but the record played over and over and tore me up. I fell in a black-lipped pile upon the floor so that when a friend came to borrow a book she did not leave me undisturbed, sleeping peacefully in an afternoon nap; she found me deoxygenating on the floor and saved my life.

My mother came rushing into the dormitory room. My eyes opened from the face in the top bunk. "Why didn't you tell me you were out of the hospital? I drove into Boston and ran around the hospital trying to find you, and got caught in rush hour traffic," my ears, floating inches from my eyes, heard her say. My mouth, clamped beneath those eyes, clanged open and said, "Go away. I do not want to see you." My ears still heard the voice, but my mouth opened again. "Go away. I do not want to see you." and then that person left.

My arm, newly discovered, as in an archeological dig, rose from the top bunk and flung the stuffed dog at the air which had surrounded her body. And my eyes, my eyes did a strange thing; they cried. My lungs sobbed and breathed again.

My bowels awoke the next day and expelled dead watery memories. My stomach became hungry and that mouth ate cereal, shredded wheat my roommate brought up from the cafeteria. I was going to live.

When I was a freshman in high school I came home to find my mother's stillness lying on the couch. My blond brother's eyes cried into the palms of his hands. "Mom's dead," he told me. But she breathed slow morphine breaths until the ambulance came. At sixteen years of age my blond brother had broken down the bedroom door in time to save our mother.

I searched her car for the gun which was missing from my step-father's collection. "I will take an ax and chop her Steinway into pieces if she does not return that gun!" he had yelled drunkenly into the telephone. I knew she had filled the Nembutal prescription, that evening we had stopped at the drugstore before she dropped me off and went to her class. I had opened her pocketbook for a tissue and now, because I remember that her purse was heavy, I know where the gun is. I need to sit in the car and wait for her to walk out of that building.

I come home from school. I get off the bus, walk down the driveway, throw my books on the dining room table, quickly change clothes, and enter the bathroom to pee. I see blood, I see a razor blade. I look closely and I see a thin strip of skin. It is my other brother's skin, but I do not know that yet.

My mother is teaching piano in the living room. She sits at the piano on her stool that turns around and around to rise in the air. Her voice counts loudly, "and One and Two and uh Three and Four." The student's air force regulation hair cut sits above his ramrod straight back. His fingers unfeelingly yet precisely hammer the correct keys.

The blond brother runs through the room, chased by the other brother. The other brother's bloodied wrists connect arms to hands which hold an ax. The step-father appears from behind the house as the brothers run out the back door and into the driveway. The step-father has a gun. "Stop this foolishness now!" he yells. "This is crazy, what are you, crazy?"

The wounded brother drops the ax and runs into the woods, where he will stay, ignoring the few voices which call only briefly to him, until early into the morning when he will sneak back in the dark and crawl into his bed to sleep.

I go down cellar to escape the piano, my step-father's anger, my mother's voice counting. There I see a knife sticking into my blond brother's bed, where his heart would be. It holds a note which explains. The wounded brother has been betrayed; the blond brother has slept with his girlfriend.

This pattern continues for months, until the wounded brother is attacking my boyfriend with an iron pipe, calling him a nigger, and yelling to me, "I suppose your brother has slept with you, too, like he's slept with everyone."

My younger brother does not have to destroy himself or anyone else because he gets cancer, and gains the vision to leave us all; to hitchhike around the country, Key West in the winter, Wyoming in the summer; and he defeats the cancer, too, losing only a thumb. Years later he sees that I have the dishes we used at home and he asks, "How can you have those in your house, don't they remind you of that?"

One night I am awakened by a knock on my bedroom door. "Can you help me?" my wounded brother softly calls. "I cut myself. I tried to put a band-aid on it, but it doesn't work." I open the door and see that his neck is slashed. "It's OK," I say to him, "It's OK, it's going to be all right."

I got away from this when I went to boarding school. But I had dreams, nightmares full of blood; my wounded brother has killed them all, all of my family; and he is stalking the woods around my dorm; his bloodied arms hold the ax.

I dress up in a short black dress, black tights, boots. I take the train to Boston and sell my body to a man. He fucks me and then he pulls out and tells me to suck his cock. I look down the plane of his body and he looks like a hairy spider with long limbs and a red cock like a dog's. I am late getting back to the school. I miss supper, so I am 'campused' for a week.

My dog died last summer because of me. My blond brother and his friend had gone to Ireland for six weeks of hiking and camping. My mother and step-father had taken my younger brother on a trip.

It was hot when my cousin and I started to walk downtown. We could not stop my dog from following us, we could not get him to go into the house. Then I remembered a way, he loved to ride in the car. "C'mon, Harold!" I called to him, "Let's go in the car, let's go in the car." I opened the door of the car and slammed it shut after Harold jumped in.

That evening we remembered. "Oh my God - Harold!" He lay dead in the car, hair and sputum covered the seats, the windows were coated with the panicked spit.

My step-brother and his friend would not help me. I had to dig a deep grave, pull Harold from the car seat onto a sheet, and drag him to the grave.

I heard Harold barking from his grave all that night. I would awaken, sweating, it was a hot night, and run to the window, but although it was a full moon I could not see him standing over the grave; I could just hear him bark.

- Jean Elardo

I'm On Hold

I'm

counting the face lines
that tell how cope went

I'm

measuring the years
against the shape of pounds

I'm

estimating success
by what was not said.

Did we gather as friends
and fellow classmates;
or is each one looking to see
if time has tread on tiptoe
more lightly on you than me?

I'm

looking in the twisted mirror of their eyes
and see me;
looking better
than the rest.

- Beth Estabrook

The Prize Winning Poem...

...Is to be written by you for the fall issue of **Parnassus**

J. L. Barnhart

Annette Colsen

Mary Aram

Anita LeBlanc

Chris Daly

Marilyn M. Chenelle

Dan Lyons

Roseanne Kranz

Kelly Sanborn

Gary Yannalfo

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Don Hayes

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John Michael Doggett

Craig Quimby

Terry Rezendes

William H. Gleed III

Carla Corcoran

Carolyn P. Reynolds

E. Reynolds

Mickie Richardson

Chris Stevens

E. LeBlanc

Denise J. LeBelle

Nancy J. Robinson

Elizabeth Buckheit

Freda Jayne

Faith Gillman

M. V. G. D'Oleo